CANTERBURY
TALES

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CANTERBURY TALES.

BY

HARRIET LEE.

Fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circle, and is still at home.
COWPER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE GERMAN'S TALE.

KRUITZNER.

> ————What is 't that takes from thee
> Thy comfort, pleasure, and thy golden sleep?
> Why dost thou bend thine eyes upon the earth,
> And start so often when thou sitt'st alone?
> Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheek?
> Oh! what portents are these?
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

TOWARDS the end of the month of February, in a winter memorably severe, a man, his wife, and their son, a boy not seven years of age, arrived at M——, an obscure town on the northern frontier of Silesia, within the estates of the Count Prince de T——. A fever that attacked the husband, together with an unexpected and heavy fall of snow, impeded all further advance towards Bohemia, their ostensible place of destination. The malady proved dangerous: and the resources of benevolence (for the travelers were suspected to be indigent) would have been soon exhausted in a petty German district, not abounding in religious foundations or opulent neighbors.

The town, though in itself extremely insignificant, had been raised to temporary consideration some years before by the residence of the prince, who had chosen to pass on that spot the period of a political disgrace; and his departure had again reduced it to its original obscurity. The inhabitants of M —— might with great justice be divided exactly into two classes: the poor who *were* proud, and the poor who were not. The former dwelt in a small number of ill-built houses confusedly huddled together, and dignified with the title of a Bourg; where, under the claims of a sort of antiquated and worn-out nobility, they indulged in arrogance and sloth. The latter, who were distributed over a long, straggling, and half-ruined suburb, were mere bourgeois, with wants and ideas equally contracted to their situation: nor had the two classes any thing in common but that selfishness and inertness which is the general result of ignorance.

Frederick Kruitzner, for so the stranger was called, and his unfortunate family, continued, therefore, to languish during more than ten days, unnoticed by any body but their host; who so far concerned himself about their future fate, as, in the progress of that time, to have made up his account that the said Kruitzner should not die in his house; for which reason he deemed it would be convenient speedily to remove him from it. For reasons, doubtless, however, more merciful and wise, Providence had decreed that Kruitzner should not at that critical period die at all: and though this conviction seemed to give but little satisfaction to any human beings, his wife and child excepted, it is probable that in the region of eternal blessedness which is to be occupied by minds, not bodies, the grateful and pious expansion of theirs would fill a larger circle in the sphere of existence than the souls of twenty—aye, a hundred—such beings as their host at M——: which hundred, indeed, stripped of their bulky corporeal clothing, would, perhaps, have formed collectively so small a mass as might almost seem to demand the eye of Omniscience to discover any portion of soul at all!

Be that as it may, Kruitzner, after having just looked, as it were, into the chasm which no ray, save that of faith, ever yet penetrated, suddenly found the vital springs once more in motion. The severity of the season, however, was still such as to preclude the possibility of passing forward with safety: had it been even otherwise, Kruitzner, though recovering, was yet too weak to undertake a journey of such length: it was even suspected that his resources no longer permitted him to attempt it. Yet had he not hitherto appeared to be absolutely penniless; and there was that in the countenance of Josephine, his wife, which announced a magnanimous confidence in the future rarely to be found in decided and habitual poverty. Josephine was, indeed, of a cast of woman not often seen. It would have been difficult to say she had perfect beauty, but she had looks that might have awed or won a world. They had indeed even actually won, to a certain degree of interest he was not accustomed to feel, the intendant for the Prince de T——; and as that quarter, or rather suburb, of the city in which his highness's palace stood contained several houses adjacent to it not tenanted, and indeed, from the long absence of the prince, hardly tenantable, though they had once been splendidly filled, the intendant, who was not unacquainted with the fears and wishes of Kruitzner's host, had for some time revolved in his mind the magnificent project of permitting the invalid and his wife to shelter themselves under the roof of one of these: judiciously calculating that the tax of gratitude he should thereby impose would most probably be paid precisely in the manner he would himself desire: namely, by the death of one, and the life of the other; or if, contrary to probability, both should happen to live, he trusted to future contingencies to reward him in some way for this extraordinary act of bounty.

It could not be doubted but the overture was received with that sensibility it seemed to demand, and which the forlorn situation of the parties was calculated to inspire them with. On the evening of a very rainy day, therefore, the invalid and his family, constrained by hard necessity, and the cold countenance of their host, departed to take possession of their new, or rather old, habitation. The few ruined conduits than ran through the town poured black and muddy torrents into the river, and a pale streak of crimson on the horizon announced the setting sun, whose influence had suspended the storm; while, through the smoky windows of those houses that had glass ones, the faces of their inmates were indistinctly seen, alternately drawn thither by the wheels of the intendant's crazy calèche, under shelter of which he had graciously offered to convey Kruitzner to his new abode. With much satisfaction their host saw the family depart; not without receiving, from their small resources, a payment sufficiently scanty, indeed, though all they could bestow, in acknowledgment of his services. Josephine, with a heart relieved by the conveyance she had found for her husband, pensively followed him, holding her little son by the hand: sometimes wading with difficulty through the mire; at others, covered by the water which streamed from the eaves of the houses; and anxiously watching the calèche, as it jogged on at a pace not much quicker than her own.

It was among the advantages of their new accommodation that they had permission to fetch wood from the prince's stores; and, perhaps, there is nobody who does not know the cheerfulness of a blazing fire. If any such persons there are, let them take a walk, like Josephine, through the moist atmosphere of a low, comfortless town; and if, like her, they happen to sit down afterwards with a beloved husband and child round the social hearth, they will, probably, not envy the first monarch in Europe his courtiers, his lusters, or his carpets. Happiness! indefinable good!—perhaps best extracted from misery!——Ah, could we but keep thee!——Yet, Josephine *did* keep thee—for the night at least: for she possessed certain materials in her own bosom to which thy precious ore, though not inseparable from, naturally adheres.—Not so Kruitzner! *his* slumbers were disturbed both by sleeping and waking visions, to which, perhaps, the impression of external objects on the organs of sense as much contributed as the yet uncertain state of his health. For the first time, after a tedious confinement, he had that evening seen day-light and the sun. He had believed he should never see it more, and to his dim eye it had all the effect of a new object. The breath of heaven, too, had blown upon his face; and recollections, long torpid under the heavy hand of sickness, were awakened in his heart. During the tedious vigils of the night, he surveyed with wondering and curious eyes the tarnished splendor of the bed and room into which he was thus strangely thrown; and though superstition peopled it not to him, as it might have done to those of his neighbors who knew the stories attached to it, that gloom which is haunted by "the ghosts of our departed joys" needs no other specter to fill it.

In the solitude and obscurity of their spacious and comfortless mansion, days and days now passed over the heads of Kruitzner and his wife. Deep snow, in the interim, capped the high mountains which separated them from Bohemia; floods inundated the country; cold chilled the human species; and it seemed as if the vital principle contracted hourly into a narrower circle, till the little town of M—— became the point at which it stopped. On those days when the sun broke through the cheerless atmosphere, Kruitzner was occasionally seen turning up the ground in the garden for the few winter roots that afforded. It was observed that he was still pale, even to sallowness; that he had powerful features, a brow marked by sorrow, and an eye of no very striking effect in his countenance, unless animated by some sudden emotion, when it darted forward a fire that seemed like new-created light upon the world. From his own habitation he never stirred; and, as that habitation was of no very good report in the neighborhood, he was little troubled with visitors. Sometimes, indeed, the wife of the postmaster condescended to look in upon Madame Kruitzner, when the intendant favored her with a seat in his bone-setting conveyance. On such occasions the good lady, who had only three faults—pride, curiosity, and the love of talking, —seldom came without bringing to the little boy pots of conserves, sugar-cakes, and such other house-wifely presents as cost nothing to the donor, and gratify the appetites common to children. When this happened, she did not fail, however, to observe, though by stealth as it were, the keen air of famine with which the boy would devour her cates; accompanied sometimes with thin slices of bread, which his mother sparingly cut for him; while his father, in melancholy silence, would lean his elbows on his knees, and, covering his face with his hands, only now and then cast wild and eager glances upon his wife and child. These temporary starts of sensibility excepted, Kruitzner was somber, abstracted, and frequently employed in writing. Yet to whom his letters were addressed remained a profound secret;—the good lady, though she had not neglected to question her husband duly on the subject, not having been able to extort the smallest information from him. For though Weilburg, such was the name of the postmaster, was not excellent in keeping a secret, he was at least more discreet than to confide it to his wife. In this instance, however, his merit was small, since, in fact, there was, as far as letters were concerned, no secret to keep: Kruitzner's, if indeed he wrote any, never being known to reach the post-office.

Mr. Welburg was, nevertheless, a man of no small importance in his department: he was believed to be rich; his wife claimed a sort of remote and left-handed relationship to the prince himself; and had been even noticed before her marriage by a certain countess who had formerly occupied the very house lately lent on sufferance to the Kruitzners. Of this countess strange things had been reported when she was alive, and strange things continued to be reported now that she was supposed to be dead. She was strongly surmised to have been the chère amie of his highness; and, as fame related, had, in a fit of jealousy, destroyed herself in one of those very apartments the Kruitzners then inhabited. Other reports, indeed, averred that, far from committing any such unchristian-like act, she had accompanied the prince in his berlin on the road to Vienna; but as she certainly had not been seen to depart from her own roof, and as an air of mystery had been, perhaps voluntarily, thrown over the business, in order to save a half-ruined reputation, the whole disgrace had been judiciously transferred to that which could best bear it—namely, the house; which, to a certain degree, stood proscribed. That under such circumstances, Madame Weilburg should become a visitor there, seemed a little extraordinary: but it is possible that she had either strength of mind or authentic information enough to know the futility of the suspicions:—or, it may be presumed, that, having once tasted the pleasures of grandeur and luxury in that very house, and seeing in Josephine an extraordinary as well as fascinating character, both of form and mind, she did not think it improbable that circumstances might bring back the days which were past.

To Mr. Weilburg the person only of Josephine was yet known; though he might almost have been said to have the hearts and heads of the whole little community of M—— in his possession; since his authority in the post-office made every thing that was interesting to either pass through his hands. Those who have been present at the opening of the bags, and delivery of the letters, alone know what a scene of perturbation and anxiety such occasions present, even in peaceful days; but in time of war, as was then the case, how many hands are stretched out, how many cheeks are flushed, how many hearts palpitate with hope, or sink with despondency! The names of a son—a brother—a father—a husband—a lover—tremble, in imperfect and half-suppressed sounds, on the lips of the standers-by; yet no decided one escapes: the strong convulsions of the mind most sensitively shrink from observation, and each retires into himself to devour the pang or the joy of the moment! Even in the town of M——, insulated as it seemed in creation, a cipher, only swelling that great aggregate termed society, these feelings were confusedly understood; and they frequently led to developments of circumstances or character, by which Weilburg knew how to profit. Nothing of this, however, had yet occurred in the case of Madame Kruitzner. She had at first attracted his notice by a certain exterior of grandeur he was unable to comprehend. "This woman is nobody," said he to himself, whenever he saw her at a distance, in her snow shoes, her closed pelisse lined with common skins, and her fur cap, marking her fine brow, and the correct outline of her features; while the little Marcellin at her side showed in his blooming countenance the exact miniature of hers;—"this woman can be nobody, who is thus able to encounter the severity of such a season! Yet what a step! what a walk! one should swear it was a coronation, instead of the business of a domestic, that she is engaged in!" Madame Kruitzner, meantime, wholly unconscious of the comments that were made on her, with sober and persevering equanimity always attended the arrival of the courier, and always, hitherto, in vain.—Now and then, indeed, she was observed to drop a tear when the child complained of cold or fatigue, which he never did till they were returning: for, by a sort of affectionate sympathy, the elastic step of the mother seemed to invigorate her young companion.

A certain confidential communication that passed at this juncture made the inquiries of Madame Kruitzner more accurately observed than before. To the two important characters of postmaster and intendant the town added a third, seldom omitted in any district however small; namely, a lawyer;—or rather one who called himself such: for the more honorable part of his fraternity would probably have alike disclaimed his pretensions and his practice. He was a busy, officious sort of personage, who knew almost every thing better than law; and exactly among that servile class of his profession who are employed to embroil a cause—an occupation which the dishonesty of their clients, not less than their own, renders, it is to be feared, full as profitable as the ending one. But though Mr. Idenstein (for such was his name) professed to live by his talents, those who knew him best were inclined to think it was the exercise of one only—the talent of being useful.—It proved, however, in this case, as in many others, a host in itself; for it made him always an acceptable guest at the only two good tables in town, the intendant's and Weilburgs's; which, as he was needy, was an advantage he failed not to profit by. To the intendant he particularly addressed himself, in the hope of obtaining his countenance, at some future period, towards a more extensive and advantageous establishment than could be found at M——, where, although the spirit of litigation abounded, the body and sinews were wanting. The intendant, on his side, was liberal of *promises ;* for he had, in reality, no intention of parting with Idenstein: having himself, as he often declared, more occasion for law, (for he very judiciously seldom termed it justice) in the management of the prince's concerns, than almost any man within the district. Idenstein's employment in Weilburg's house was of a lighter nature, and one better suited to his taste: for it chiefly consisted in retailing all the intrigues of the neighborhood to his hostess; which, as he was not malicious, but only credulous and vain, he often did with some pleasantry, and without interruption from her husband—a sly, quiet, stagnant sort of character, more apt to listen than to talk; and one who thus, under the appearance of a dull taciturnity, concealed a disposition no less frivolous and inquisitive than that of his wife.

Various inquiries, supposed to be set on foot by a great man, now directed the attention of this respectable trio to Kruitzner and his family. There was, indeed, no certainty, and, in some respects, little probability, of their being the objects of the inquiry; but idleness and curiosity had marked them out as such. The persons concerned in forwarding it were at least assured that no ill consequence could result to themselves; nor was any one amongst them of a character to advert to the evil it might produce to others. Sly conjectures, crafty observations, together with a sort of petty activity, formed the habit of their minds; and this habit spontaneously directed itself to every thing where there was the smallest appearance of mystery. That of want is, alas! too painful to the initiated not to bid them shrink with reluctance from the development. Kruitzner and his wife, lulled into temporary security, nevertheless believed they had, in their present condition, no other evil to contend with: nor had it hitherto occurred to them to suspect, that, while they were striving to snatch all the repose that poverty and sorrowful recollections would allow, the snare was secretly winding around that threatened finally to destroy it.

That repose, precarious thus in its nature, was nevertheless every day fading from their grasp, even while they were yet ignorant that any one was at hand to tear it from them. Their retreat at M——, which had in the first instance promised them little else than a grave, appeared, from the circumstances in which they were involved, to shut them out almost as completely from the rest of the world as if they had really been buried there. Stationed within that narrow limit, and devoid of the means either to advance or recede, they found themselves in the most frightful of all solitudes—that of the soul: and though there is a principle in nature, and a still stronger in love, which obliges us to rejoice, despite of past calamities, in the recovery of a being whom death alone seems capable of sheltering from future ones, yet did the faint pleasure of unexpected convalescence daily give way, even in both, to the most racking inquietude. The good genius of Josephine, for on her a good genius still attended, had, nevertheless, so far favored them, that the only letter she had ever sent from M——, written immediately on her arrival there, and at the critical moment, as it seemed, of her husband's fate, had, by means of the obscurity in which she was then plunged, fortunately escaped the cognizance of Weilburg; who, except on occasions of interest or curiosity, seldom executed his employment in person. The mere superscription of that letter would have enlightened him more effectually than his own ingenuity, or even that of his assistants, ever succeeded in doing: but it had been carried to the office late at night by Josephine herself, thrown hastily into the bags, and the answer to it—the important and anxiously expected answer—never arrived.

Sanguine as the parties concerned in the present scrutiny respecting Kruitzner and his wife might originally be, they had very soon opportunity to perceive that there was either little to discover, or that the discovery would not be easily made. The habitual reserve of his character had, from the first, afforded small hope of success; and in hers there was a generous plainness and candor that defeated, even without intending it, the little arts of a sophisticated and frivolous mind. It was in vain for Madame Weilburg to observe—"that the delicate hands of her new acquaintance were never fitted for those servile offices in which she was employed:" in vain did the good lady wonder, "that Madame Kruitzner had not profited by the kind dispositions of the intendant, to solicit some appointments for her husband in the household of the prince;" even her happy prognostics upon the promising countenance of Marcellin were thrown away. Josephine was little likely to be touched with the coarse flattery of one whose penetration into her condition or her character was so small: and though a grateful sense of some trifling obligations, together with a natural indulgence to the foibles of others, taught her, on these occasions, to practice an extraordinary self-command, it was not possible for her always to disguise that restlessness and impatience which springs from an agitated heart.

During the first days of this intercourse the intendant himself frequently made one of the party; but he had just that sort of understanding which informed him he was, of all men living, least calculated to answer his own purpose of winding into confidence. He had gained possession of his situation soon after the prince quitted M——; and having originally taken up all the shreds and patches of self-importance left there by his predecessor, he found it impossible to lay them down in that degree the haughty and repulsive manners of Kruitzner demanded: him, therefore, he soon most cordially hated: nor did the pleasure he really found in seeing Josephine indemnify him for the mortification his pride received in the society of her husband: he, consequently, discontinued his visits, or paid them very rarely, and at hours when he believed he should not encounter the latter; turning over all exercise of ingenuity that respected him to Idenstein, whose subtle and pliant manners eminently fitted him for the task.

Kruitzner, though of a more complex character than his wife, was yet, however, of a more vulnerable one. Neither humiliation nor adversity had succeeded in eradicating from his mind certain proud and turbulent feelings, which, though by necessity rendered passive for the moment, were ready instruments in the hands of those around him to effect any purpose of craft with. Nothing but a profound conviction of the danger and hopelessness of his situation rendered him impenetrable; and it was easy to discern that there were springs in his soul by which he might still be governed. It had not been the lot of those who sought, yet to discover them, however; and it was even plain that, if they ever did so, it would be more the work of their fortune than of their talents: yet little conciliating, or conciliatory, as were the general habits of his temper, they were not always equally intractable: for to the forlorn and desponding heart, however cautiously it may be guarded, there will still be moments in which the voice of flattery sounds like that of friendship. Idenstein, who had address enough to perceive this, was at infinite pains to improve those moments; and he failed not, whenever they presented themselves, to pour forth such general and desultory effusions of philanthropy as he supposed calculated to make a deep impression on the mind of his hearer; that he did make, however, seemed far from answering the purpose designed by it. Kruitzner was, indeed, frequently roused to momentary attention: something like hope would, on these occasions, kindle in his eye; but a still stronger feeling seemed almost immediately to quench it. He would gaze and listen with the intentness of a man who is desirous to receive as a truth what his mind, nevertheless, rejects: till, both the powers of hearing and sight being at length absorbed in some remote idea, he would start from his seat, rush into the garden, and remain there till the departure of his guest.

Idenstein had sagacity enough to conclude that he who flies from the danger of betraying himself is more than half way in the net; and after one of these broken starts, he one day ventured to follow him. Kruitzner was standing on a small eminence that commanded the distant mountains, and looking earnestly towards a particular spot. The snow, which had fallen so late in the season, had rapidly thawed before the increasing heat of the sun; traces of vegetation were obvious throughout the whole country around; and a thousand streams, swelled suddenly to petty torrents, and seen both in the valley and nearer hills, brightened the prospect.

"You are fond of this view, I think?" said Idenstein, who had frequently seen him on the same spot.

"It looks towards Bohemia," replied Kreitzner, motioning that way with his hand:—there was something singularly mournful in his tone:—he wore, too, "a countenance more in sorrow than in anger."

"True—you—you are going thither?" again rejoined his inquisitive companion.

"I *was* going thither."

"And why do you not pursue your journey?"

Kruitzner started.

"Are you not afraid to ask?" said he, fiercely.—There was something so odd in the question, and so odd in the manner in which it was put, that Idenstein felt for a moment not wholly devoid of the sensation imputed to him.

"Dare you solicit my confidence?" continued Kruitzner, in the same tone. Idenstein, though his nerves had not quite recovered the attack upon them, yet brightened up at the word confidence, and muttered something expressive of more than a civil assent.

"Take it then, in few words—I am poor!"—The countenance of the inquirer again fell. Of all Kruitzner's concerns, this, in fact, seemed to him the only one that did not require to be told; and it was, unquestionably, that he least desired to hear: he ventured, however, to express his regret on the occasion; and to add, "that he was himself precisely in the same predicament."

"I thought so!" said Kruitzner, with bitter irony: "I had heard that the acquaintance of a poor man are always discreet enough to be poor too."—Idenstein, who had really spoken truth—not, indeed, for its own sake, but because it happened to dictate the answer most common and convenient on similar occasions, felt rebuked. During the short pause that succeeded, he had, however, time to recover his presence of mind, and to perceive all the difference of situation between the man who avows his poverty, and he who only suffers it to be guessed. He believed he saw himself touching a critical moment, from which much would be gained or lost to the future; and the recollection that he acted under the intendant gave him courage for what was to follow. He thought, moreover,—and not without reason,—that he perceived remote traces of irresolution in the countenance of Kruitzner.

"Poverty," said he, fixing his eyes, therefore, on his companion, and raising his voice with an oratorical emphasis, "is, like all other evils, merely comparative! I may consider myself as poor, yet be in a condition to show my regard by assisting another.—A small sum"—Kruitzner suddenly changed color, and the violent palpitation of his heart was distinctly visible. "A *very small* sum," continued Idenstein, "I think I could command."

"Let it but enable me to accomplish my journey," said Kruitzner.—He paused, and his voice was smothered.

"Whither would you go!—and who is the person I am thus to oblige?"—Kruitzner hesitated; an indistinct apprehension crossed his mind; and the grossness of the man who could thus abruptly question him presented itself in glaring colors: but sad necessity, and newly awakened hope, struggled in his breast with a force calculated to silence every opposing sentiment.

"Wish not, my kind friend!" said he, at length, after a silent conflict, and in a subdued tone, "to know what it would be painful for me to tell, and of no avail to you to hear.—If you dare trust me, accept my promise that you will neither trust the powerless nor the ungrateful.—I have no other security to give!"—That he had proffered was by no means in Idenstein's way to receive: but short as his progress towards confidence had been in comparison with his expectations, yet as he found he was not likely then to derive further advantage from the conversation, he was content to accede to the terms proposed—having previously succeeded, however, in explaining his offer down to so *very* small a sum, as nearly dispelled his own fears, and completely annihilated the momentary gleam of hope he had kindled in the bosom of his companion.

Inconsiderable as was the sum Kruitzner thus obtained, and inadequate towards the purpose he so earnestly desired to accomplish, it was yet such as the cruelty of his fate utterly forbade him to reject. Since his residence at M——, he had known privation and poverty in a degree which, far from having felt, he had never before even witnessed: famine itself now approached: and as he had not supposed it possible that the cold hearts of those around would induce them to lend any succor to a man who dared not sufficiently solve the enigma of his own life to proffer a hope of payment, the desperation of his fate pressed so forcibly upon him, that the interference of Idenstein seemed little less than a miracle. As the fervor of this impression, however, wore off, his knowledge of mankind taught him to look in that for the cause. Idenstein quickly perceived that he was now, in turn, become a subject of much anxious observation to his new friend; who, for several days after, never saw him without striving to find in his looks and demeanor traces of some sinister design. In this, however, the penetration of Kruitzner was foiled. Idenstein had naturally a kind of pert frivolity, that wore the appearance of artlessness; he was, besides, too much on his guard to allow any motive to be discernible for his actions, save that he announced; and Kruitzner was at length induced, or, perhaps, was willing to believe, that he had really excited a sentiment of disinterested kindness in the bosom of a man so utterly distinct from himself. This conviction taught him a little to unbend. He did it, as he believed, with circumspection; but it was not in the impetuous character of Kruitzner to reason accurately, or to guard himself at all points. His real necessities, his sanguine disposition, the dangerous habit of relying on his fate, soon divested him of his caution; and though he still preserved an inviolable silence with regard to past events, he omitted to direct his penetration to the future.

Idenstein was careful not to throw his new acquaintance off his guard. He had now changed his battery; and, perceiving he could not allure to confidence, waited the occasion for extorting it. He had no doubt he should succeed; and, therefore, took pleasure in the pursuit: for it was among the silly foibles of his own character, to sport, as he believed, with those around him; to dupe them, while they were arrogating superior prudence; and to enjoy his triumph. It was a character that cost him dear in the end; and, even in its progress, often rendered him a contemptible and unrewarded puppet in the hands of others. In this instance, however, he was only one out of three, neither of whom suspected the length or importance of the clue they were unraveling. The ingenuity of Idenstein, aided by his apparent insignificance, was not, however, unsuccessful. The victim plunged deeper and deeper into the snare: and so well did his crafty adversary understand how to tempt his wants by the display and loan of petty sums, that the unfortunate Kruitzner at length started as from a dream; and, in finding himself a debtor, became suddenly sensible to a new and undefined misery, of which, amid all his calamities, he had hitherto been ignorant. Dissimulation or fear were alike uncongenial to his nature; but he perceived the absolute necessity of practicing the former, and he strove to regulate his conduct by that conviction. Idenstein was not, however, deceived: what followed between them became, therefore, a contest of cunning, in which the latter had all the advantage. It was in his choice, at any time, to rouse the proud spirit of Kruitzner to a point of defiance that should put him within his power, and it was not seldom that he touched upon the experiment. He was not wholly without a personal fear, however, that taught him to forbear in time: while Kruitzner, on his side, strove no less sedulously to avoid a crisis so dangerous; and secretly cherished the only hope he had now for a long period been able to entertain—that of accumulating, by means of this forbearance, a small hoard that should supply the necessities of his wife and child, while he himself undertook the desperate project of pursuing his journey to Bohemia on foot. How great would have been his surprise to have known that this scheme was, perhaps, the only one which all parties, could they have penetrated it, would have favored! Yet such, as far as the junto at M—— was concerned, was undoubtedly the case.

By comparing the inquiries that had reached them with their own observations, this sagacious circle had, at length, satisfied themselves that Kruitzner and his wife were in reality above the condition they avowed; and busy imagination had eked out their small share of discernment, with the conclusion that one or the other sprang from a family of rank, and was become liable, by a disgraceful connection, to its resentment. Had Madame Weilburg been consulted, she would at once have pronounced the transgressor upon his hereditary honors to be Kruitzner; in whose person, though faded, there were yet sufficient traces of dignity and grace to arrest female attention: but the jury on this occasion were men; and they, with one voice, pronounced Josephine to be unquestionably the culprit. Enlightened partly by their own suggestions, and partly by her eyes, they saw beauty, grandeur, and all, in short, that was really to be seen in her—except virtue: and, as she was not *their* relation, they were inclined to think that a non-essential in her character. In fact, poor Josephine, though very unconscious of the obligation, certainly owed something to their suspicion of her wanting it: for though each would individually have had little reluctance to consign Kruitzner to hard diet and a dungeon, there was not one of them could, without scruple, determine on giving up his wife. Of these sentiments the intendant was the leader. Her personal charms, more than any interest created by her situation, had first induced him to step forth her protector; and this circumstance was so far fortunate, as it shielded her, on every occasion, from the wanton insolence of Idenstein, who attributed views to his employer more decided than the indolence and coldness of his nature really prompted him to pursue.

The project Kruitzner had continued to meditate, he, at length, confided to his wife. Those only who had known the previous events of her life could tell the heart-sickness it was calculated to excite. Yet such was the peculiarity of their fate, that remonstrance would have been cruelty. To be able together to withdraw privately from M—— seemed little short of an impossibility: that she and her child should pursue the journey on foot was wholly such. There was not the remotest hope that Idenstein, or indeed any human being, would assist them in undertaking it openly:—so far the contrary, that both were sensible mystery and suspicion had attached itself too much to their fate to allow the circle in which they lived voluntarily to lose sight of them. Yet the importance of the journey was no less felt by Josephine than her husband. She was well convinced that he had never loved any human being as he loved her; nothing, therefore, but the extremest despair could have induced him to think of quitting her; nor, on her side, was there a consideration on earth, save that before her, which could make her consent to their separation. Yet, in addition to the exquisite suffering attending such an event, she felt she had another trial to encounter, which the habits of Kruitzner's mind did not even lead him to suspect: in a word, that it would require an almost invincible fortitude to remain in the house they now inhabited with no other companion than Marcellin. Superstition had, nevertheless, little or no share in her repugnance. The report of Madame Weilburg, who was never weary of talking about her late "dear and beautiful countess," had sufficiently persuaded her that the story related of the latter was, if not wholly ill-founded, at least false in its catastrophe. She had, in fact, gathered enough to be assured that the countess was still in existence; nor were the opinions and character of Josephine, even at the worst, such as inclined her to tremble at the dead. Had they been so, the interior of the house, marked by a depressing and faded magnificence, distributed into intricate offices, once crowded with domestics, now dark, still, and lonely, would have been sufficient to have appalled her. It was in itself a body without a soul—a region whence every thing vital appeared strangely to have fled. But the fears of Josephine were of a nearer and less chimerical nature, and originated not in the house itself, but its situation, which was at the extremest verge of a ruinous and half-unpeopled suburb. A spacious garden extended behind from the prince's grounds to the high-road, surrounded by a wall extremely dilapidated, and so low in many places as almost to invite intruders; while the neglected state in which the whole had long been suffered to remain gave it an appearance particularly rude and solitary. That wing of the house which was nearest to the town adjoined to a mansion that had formerly been possessed by the retinue of the prince; it was now uninhabited, and formed a gloomy barrier between the palace and the habitation of Kruitzner. No sound, therefore, that issued from the latter could be heard by any human ear; nor was it possible that any protector should be summoned thither: yet was the house every where so slightly barred, either because the narrow circle of the town secured its neighborhood from depredation, or that the numerous train of the countess rendered precaution unnecessary, that any night wanderer might without difficulty enter it.

Kruitzner had himself assented to this observation, when made by his wife during the early days of their abode there. But misery is an exclusive feeling, and leaves no room for meaner and subordinate ones; the circumstance had therefore faded from his mind, as altogether immaterial: nor, while enclosing Josephine and his child in the same apartment with himself, did he believe he had any thing to apprehend, or to lose. Beyond that apartment and the adjoining saloon, of which they had also taken possession, a long range of rooms extended—spacious, and chiefly dismantled. Marcellin, to whom the general appearance of the house was not very inviting, had at first found some difficulty to reconcile himself to so cheerless a residence. Curiosity, however, led him soon to explore it: nor did he fail to return on these occasions with strange tales to his mother, either of noises that were in fact caused by some remaining articles of furniture accidentally displaced by himself, or dungeons which proved, upon examination, to be nothing but cellars and recesses. His parents sometimes smiled at, and sometimes chid him. Josephine, in particular, who had often occasion to prove the fallacy of his fears, had at length ceased to heed them; and, as the boy, though not without the capricious cowardice of his age, was, on the whole, of an enterprising character, he had ceased to heed them also.

If, under these circumstances of real or imaginary danger, terror at any moment assailed Josephine herself, the consciousness of their poverty forbade her to cherish it. Even at the worst, Kruitzner was ever near her—active, intrepid, and manly: but of his protection she was now on the point of being deprived; and, however small the temptation her situation offered, either to plunder, or offence of any kind, it is still the lot of woman to fear the evils of wantonness and levity—evils, which the very certainty that she must fear, and, whatever her vigor of mind, may be unable to repel, often tempts the wicked or the thoughtless to inflict! Josephine justly distrusted her own fortitude when the voice of Kruitzner should be no longer near to encourage, or his arm to shield her; when the very apprehension of the sufferings he was encountering might unstring her nerves; or the possibility of his eternal absence overwhelm her heart with despondency. Yet the trial, fearful as it appeared, she believed must be encountered; and, what was indispensable, she would have despised herself had she wholly shrunk from. Vigorously collecting, therefore, the stronger powers of her mind, she resolved silently to abide the issue, whatever it might prove, with resolution.

The frame, however, is not always equal to sustaining the struggles of the heart. A just mode of thinking, and a happy temperament, had done much throughout life for Josephine; but they could not do every thing; and, despite of her efforts, her cheek announced to Kruitzner that all was not well within her bosom. His own feelings interpreted hers. Days of painful irresolution succeeded on both sides, during which their deep abstraction, and the heavy rains which continued incessantly to fall, rendered them insensible to the total solitude in which they had been permitted to live. Marcellin was not so inattentive. He was extremely tired of the wet weather, which kept him within the house, and very much surprised and angry that nobody came to enliven it. The first gleam of sunshine was a moment of transport to him: he skipped twenty times in a quarter of an hour to the door, and, at last, bethought himself of requesting permission to pay a short visit to Madame Weilburg, whose closet, he was secretly not without hopes, still contained some of those good things he had been accustomed to find there. Marcellin, however, like most of his age, forgot his promise of returning as soon as he was out of sight. He was right in suspecting the cakes and sweetmeats were not exhausted. He got more than his portion, and saw, besides, such a number of entertaining sights as put home entirely out of his head. His stay, indeed, so far exceeded his usual limits, that his parents began to be alarmed. Josephine was already anxiously near the door, and her husband was preparing to seek the little stray, when he suddenly jumped in, wild with spirits and indulgence.——"Weilburg and his wife were dressed *so* fine!—the intendant was *so* busy!—Mr. Idenstein too was there! the prince's own coach was going out!—and if his parents would but look out of the window, they would see it bring home the stranger to the palace!" While Kruitzner and Josephine smiled at this prattle, which was blended with a thousand gay and infantine caresses, the innocent child wound it up, by pronouncing, in the name of *the stranger*, that of the being on earth most hostile to the safety and repose of his father.

Josephine, who saw the change in her husband's countenance, had hardly time to silence the transports of the boy, and hurry him, with her, into another room, when Idenstein entered—-adorned, indeed, as had been described, in holiday foppery, and with a repetition of the same hateful intelligence. He addressed himself familiarly to Madame Kruitzner as she passed him, and coldly to her husband. They had differed when they last met, and Idenstein apologized, with an air of conceited importance, for an absence which he secretly knew to be acceptable. Kruitzner, whose mind was at that moment a chaos of perturbation and surprise, was little disposed to consider their relative situations, or how far worse his own had insensibly become since he entered M——: impoverished, indeed—but no man's slave—for he was then no man's debtor!—personal insult or degradation, in any possible shape, he had never yet known: and, if the late transactions with Idenstein had sometimes inspired a transient and painful feeling that resembled the latter, he had banished it from his bosom, as one who believes death itself to be preferable. With such habits and sentiments, roused as they now were by the most poignant recollections, the frivolous being before him became almost as completely annihilated to his eyes as to his heart. Idenstein, possessed with his own self-importance, did not easily discover this: but when he did, he well knew how to harrow up the proud spirit that could teach it him, by an abrupt and insolent demand, which it was impossible to satisfy.

Kruitzner, forced thus hatefully back upon the misery of the present, again shrunk into himself, with an indignant pause, and questioned his soul upon all the possibilities of the future. He was now every way taken in the toils! A few hours alone, probably, intervened between him and the formidable enemy he had hitherto successfully avoided. That he could no longer do so he had every reason to suspect:—but, at the very best, the situation in which he was involved with Idenstein (the barrier of ostensible kindness once broken between them) exposed him to humiliations which he found it impossible to endure.—To make good his long-intended departure on that very night seemed the only method of escaping them; and dangerous, therefore, as the attempt might prove, both to himself and Josephine, there was no longer any alternative but to hazard it. This resolution made, the tempest of his soul gradually subsided: a kind of desperate stillness seemed to lock up his faculties. He half-smoothed his brow; dismissed, though with some difficulty, his troublesome companion; and, closing the doors even against his family, sat down, in solitude and gloom, to meditate throughout the evening on the future fate of that wife and child whom he was thus driven by cruel necessity to abandon, and to calculate by what further suffering he was himself yet to expiate the wanton follies of the past.—Such was now the forlorn and hopeless situation of a man who might, at one time, have said with Anthony:

——"I was so great—so happy—so belov'd—
Fate could not ruin me;—till I took pains,
And worked against my fortune—chid her from me,
And turned her loose;—yet still she came again.
My careless days, and my luxurious nights
At length have wearied her!"——

He who had announced himself at M—— simply as Frederick Kruitzner was by birth a Bohemian, and of the first class of nobility. Under the obscure name he now bore, he had buried that transmitted to him through a long line of illustrious ancestors, and which his father had hoped to see descend untarnished in the person of his son. Those hopes had long since vanished: and, before the period at which Kruitzner had arrived at M——, Count Siegendorf had ceased to know whether or not he had a son in existence.

The count himself, though his character was, in the end, not wholly free from a certain degree of austerity, grafted upon it by afflicting circumstances, was naturally noble, generous, and humane. He was not without the pride of rank; but it acted only in a certain sphere. His moderation rendered him dear to his inferiors, in an age when subordination was vassalage, and every lord a petty despot. He was not young when he became a father, and he looked with the peculiar fondness of one who had hardly hoped to be such, on the son whom a dying wife trebly endeared to him. In the education of the young man nothing was neglected that was either honorable or useful: nor were his talents such as to disgrace his preceptors. His boyish days, if they gave not the promise of any eminent vigor of mind, were yet marked by quickness of apprehension and feeling: and in his rapid progress towards manhood, his father believed he saw the promise of an honorable life. The person of the young count was early formed. The hardy exercises to which he was habituated, rendered it vigorous and manly. His features were fine, his voice was commanding, his eye then sparkled with that flame which now burnt so dimly in the socket; and he had a loftiness of demeanor which seemed the expression of a noble soul.

To this character of person, that of his mind, however, did not correspond. He had rather pride than dignity; and, unhappily, that very failing, which, when it springs from the consciousness of noble descent, sometimes becomes the source of noble actions, had on him a very opposite effect; for he was proud, not of his ancestors, but of himself. His mind had not vigor enough to trace causes in their effects. The splendor, therefore, which the united efforts of education, fortune, rank, and the merits of his progenitors, threw around him, was early mistaken for a personal gift—a sort of emanation proceeding from the luster of his own endowments, and for which, as he believed, he was indebted to nature, he resolved not to be accountable to man. By feelings like these, the grand principles of filial duty and affection could not fail to be undermined; and, reasoning progressively upon this system, every new distinction which advancing life necessarily brought with it, to a young man introduced under auspices so favorable, nourished the secret fault of his nature. He never paused to inquire what he could have made himself, had he been born in any rank but that he filled. He was distinguished: he saw it—he felt it—he was persuaded he should ever be so; and while yet a youth in the house of his father—dependent on his paternal affection, and entitled to demand credit of the world merely for what he was to be—he secretly looked down upon the world as made only for him.

The crimes, however, by which such a character might have been stained were, fortunately, not congenial to his: the love of pleasure was the great spring of his soul—a passion little remarkable at a very early period; for at a very early period the circle of his pleasures could not be other than narrow: nor were boyish sports the objects of serious reprehension. But when nature and education seemed to have done their part, and the important one of man was to commence, how was his father shocked and astonished to find all that should have led to generous emulation or heroic virtue perverted solely to the purposes of self-indulgence and voluptuous dissipation. Willingly, however, did the tender parent allow for the force of temptations youth seldom wholly withstands. He depended on the innate virtues of his son to arrest their progress after a certain period, and on his own paternal authority finally to subdue them; but the young count, wanton with prosperity, was little disposed to pause in the career of his pleasures; and the first pointed reprimand of his father conveyed to the latter that most afflicting of all pangs—a conviction that his reprimands would for the future be fruitless. With trembling uncertainty he ventured to probe deeper into the heart of his son, and learned to shrink before the fearful apprehension of seeing himself despised there. It was now time to assert his own claims;—Bohemia was on the point of plunging into a bloody and ruinous war.* The almost unanimous rejection of the Austrian yoke, offered to the brave and independent a sphere of action calculated to awaken every nobler energy of the soul. The state had not yet, however, summoned all its supporters: they were called upon by turns individually; and their collective force was reserved for that period when all hope of a peaceful adjustment should be frustrated. Count Siegendorf had been among the first of those who had armed their vassals: he now proposed to draw them into action, eager to execute a plan he had long meditated of entrusting the command of them to his son;—persuaded that he should, in so doing, afford him an occupation gratifying to the turbulence of his youth, and which, as it had been that of his ancestors, their example would teach him to fill with glory.

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* Commonly called the War of Thirty Years.

The young man was both naturally and habitually intrepid. The avowal of this determination was, therefore, received by him with unfeigned satisfaction: and he pressed forward the preparations for his own departure to the camp, with a zeal that once more invigorated the half-extinguished hopes of his father.

Again was he received in a new circle with those flattering testimonies of regard on which he was so well disposed to rely. Much was expected from him, and much, therefore, in advance was granted to him; but he had not been long with the army before it was discovered that glory was in his eyes only another mode of pleasure, and not exactly of the kind he most coveted: he was, besides, self-opinionated enough ever to believe he might pursue it his own way, and arrogant enough to assert his opinions; in the persuasion that those who controverted them had, as was indeed sometimes the case, no other advantage over him but that of which he always denied the validity—experience. Under these circumstances he could not be deemed a good soldier: and such was the nature of the war, that the cause he did not serve his influence and example were calculated to injure. Of his personal courage, indeed, no doubt was entertained, for he had frequently given proofs of it equally useless and rash: but the diminution of his followers, and the impoverished state of his finances, were particulars, that, as they could not be concealed, soon brought home to his father the conviction that he was no longer to be trusted as a leader.

Complaints extorted from all superior to him in command daily confirmed this. The count knew too well his own importance in the state, to believe that any member of it would thus speak of his darling son, and the heir of a powerful domain, unless impelled by the strongest necessity. That necessity continually became more urgent, and the complaints more importunate. The young man, relying on his personal merit, and full of an arrogant self-sufficiency which left him little disposed to weigh what was passing around, except it pressed upon his pride, was far, meantime, from being aware of the storm that impended: it burst, therefore, like thunder, when an authoritative mandate absolutely took from him all future command or influence over the vassals of his family. This mandate he was sufficiently inclined to dispute: but he now, for the first time, began indistinctly to perceive, that, whatever might be his own estimation of himself, he had not yet made progress enough in life to enter the lists of honor or responsibility with his father. A confused sense of shame, blended with a suspicion of error, passed rapidly across his mind; but it was a troublesome sort of feeling, and he dismissed it as such.

The count, nevertheless, had not thus mortified, or degraded his son, without preparing somewhat that might soften the blow. He had secretly solicited, and obtained for him, a command in the army, which, though of infinitely less importance to the state than that he had lost, was not ill suited to his rank in life, and secured to him the opportunity of recovering that estimation his indiscretions had robbed him of. And now then all again was well in the mind of the youth. He observed to his companions that he "had lost a command given only by the indulgence of a father;—or rather, one which he might consider as the claim of his birth: the rank he had just received, though less distinguished, was, therefore, infinitely more honorable. It was bestowed by his country—it was a proof of his desert!—a proof that he commanded fortune, and might henceforth defy her frowns!" —He was nearer the experiment than he expected. The post in which he was stationed stood exposed in a particular manner to the attacks of the enemy. A furious alarm was given during the night. The duties of his situation demanded every exertion of promptitude or valor; but he was buried in a licentious debauch, and incapable of acting. The post was lost—his honor tarnished—the furious resentment of his countrymen could no longer be controlled:—he was dismissed by the general voice, from all employment, and banished to his estates: the lenity extorted by his rank alone moderating an indignation that might have led to consequences the most fatal.

And now he began to suspect that he did not command fortune. A fierceness, dormant in his nature, and ever roused when his personal feelings were offended, impelled him to some desperate act of vengeance and rebellion. But against a nation—a father! a father whose almost unlimited indulgence could not fail to inspire him with some affection, though it extended not to the weighing parental feelings in balance with his own!—no remedy, no alleviation, presented itself. In the first transports of a soul, thus rent, as it were, with contending passions, he thought not—

> "To throw away the worser part of it,
> And live the better with the other half;"

but, fixing at once upon the most desperate resolution, he collected a quantity of gold and jewels, more than sufficient for a temporary provision, and, attended only by two servants, passed into Saxony. Alas! he little knew the lingering banishment to which he condemned himself.

In the first tumult and agony occasioned by this event, Count Siegendorf would willingly have made almost any sacrifice to recall his son. Unhappily the greatness of his efforts only confirmed in the latter the idea of his own value in society. Placing to the account of general regret and estimation that which was, in fact, simply the effect of parental fondness, he conditioned, he protracted, he wavered, till the resentment of the count was at length roused to temporary alienation: he took the field himself, to atone for the misconduct of his son; and the softer feelings of nature insensibly died away before the increasing tumult of war. Nor were the pleasures of a gay and luxurious court less adverse to them in the bosom of the young man. He now, for the first time, felt himself wholly uncontrolled. His resources were great, his reception every where splendid; his personal accomplishments and lavish expenditure created him flatterers, if not friends: there was only one spot in the world where he had ever heard rebuke: to that spot, therefore, he daily felt an increasing reluctance to return; for he was not wise enough to know that the language of unqualified panegyric is always that of indifference or insincerity.

Time, however, which alike dissipates the illusions of the flatterer and the flattered, at length began to strip the son of Count Siegendorf of the luster in society that title had hitherto given him. He had been received there at first as what he really was—a dissipated, turbulent, and inconsiderate young man: it was now suspected that he would prove a profligate one. His former character excluded him from the society of the rigidly virtuous: the latter seemed likely to degrade him to a class much below it. The worldly wise, the prudent, the proud, alternately began to shun him:—these, however, did not fill the foremost line of the circle in which he lived, and he missed them not. An evil he deemed infinitely more serious now seemed to menace him: his pecuniary resources were drawing to an end, and he saw no mode of repairing them, but by a step at once so humiliating to his self-love, and adverse to his habits of life, that he could not resolve to take it. His letters on this subject to his father were answered by remonstrances, which, though they sometimes awakened a tender sentiment of regret in his heart, were insupportably painful to his pride. That pride at length found another hope on which to rest—hostile, indeed, to the interests of his country, but eminently favorable to himself. The Austrian power had every appearance of being restored throughout Bohemia; an event which, if it took place, would necessarily bring with it the disgrace of those who had disgraced him. To this hope he now almost anxiously looked forward: for he had hovered too long in Saxony, the banners of which were already displayed in the imperial cause. He even debated with himself whether he should not join them, and give to his own return the air of a triumph:—this, however, a secret sense of honor and filial duty forbade. He therefore quitted the court of the elector, to carry his dissipation and follies elsewhere; but he did not fail to sound his father with respect to his plans, and to hint to the latter the security he might at least derive to himself by the apparent secession of his son from a cause likely to prove unfortunate.

To projects half disgraceful, and, as he believed, wholly illusive, Count Siegendorf listened with disdain. Three years had nearly rolled away without producing that reformation his incessant and repeated indulgences taught him to expect. His fortune had been every way drained; but he had spent it gloriously in his own person, and unworthily only in that of his son. He now loudly and vehemently proclaimed his intention of renouncing that son, if he delayed to return to the paths of honor:—he did delay, till reconciliation was no longer practicable, and the whole weight of his father's indignation was ready to fall upon him. As he had reason to know his personal liberty would be endangered through the steps taken by the latter, who secretly moved every foreign state by turns to give up a young man who thus disgraced his own, he changed his name, and became a wanderer on the northern frontier.

Here he at length painfully learned that he could no longer command fortune.—Fortune!—alas! he could no longer command even the meanest of her votaries. All resources from his father were finally cut off; his own, estimated by his habits of expense, were nearly exhausted: irritability of mind had united with dissipation to impair his health: a tedious and consumptive malady preyed upon it; and he, who three years before thought the world was made for him, now began to believe he was only to occupy that small portion of it allotted to the humblest individual. The virtue yet lingering in a heart not wholly hardened or corrupt induced him to resolve on sparing his father the final pang. He altered his route, and continued to wander through several towns of Pomerania and Lower Saxony—frugal, less from necessity than from absolute indifference to all that had once seduced or allured him. He was at length obliged, by increasing weakness and indisposition, to stop at Hamburg.—Though once living only in the tumult of conviviality, he had now no longer strength or spirits to support the noise of a house of public entertainment; hiring, therefore, an apartment in a remote quarter of the town, he seriously began to deliberate whether he should await death, or advance to meet it. It was at this crisis his guardian angel first interfered; the spirit of peace and honorable poverty was in the air he breathed, and soon communicated its invigorating influence to his heart.

The apartments nearest those of the count were inhabited by a man of the name of Michelli; a Florentine by birth, and of a family which, though not of the first rank, was yet noble. Born indigent, but with a taste for the sciences, Michelli had pursued them with avidity under the greatest master of the age. But as he had not talents or protectors to shelter him from that persecution to which even Galileo finally became a victim, he was obliged, at an early period of life, to quit his country. He carried with him an only daughter; and fixing his residence where he believed he might with safety pursue his tastes, supplied the narrow circle of their domestic wants by his ingenuity in making mathematical instruments. The invention of the telescope, yet in its infancy, had already excited the wonder and admiration of the learned: and though far from having attained that perfection which the masterly skill of future genius was to produce, it had already thrown a new and almost supernatural light over the regions of science. To give it those powers of which he believed it capable was the constant aim and employment of Michelli. But while anxiously, and even industriously, tracing the progress of knowledge, the philosopher had yet in his moments of leisure an eye for the human countenance, and a heart for human feelings. The young invalid, consequently, did not pass unnoticed by him. He perceived that he was friendless and a stranger: it was precisely his own situation in society; and, without officiously obtruding, he sought therefore the occasion of obliging him. To those simple courtesies of life which spring spontaneously from the heart, the young man, amidst all his varied experience, had yet been a stranger, and they made therefore a singular impression upon his. Insensibly he permitted civility to advance into slight, but social, intercourse; and it was on one of these occasions he first beheld Josephine. Though then in the very flower of youth, she was hardly so handsome as she afterwards became. She had the Italian dignity of features, a chaste simplicity of manner, together with an understanding which it seemed the peculiar privilege of her heart to develop, and which, like her person, received from that its last and most touching charm. Her beauty was not overlooked by the count, but his heart and his passions were alike joyless and inert. To his palled imagination life was already vapid: he believed he had exhausted its prime sources of pleasure—love, friendship, and flattery; yet he did not quit the humble hearth of Michelli and his daughter without carrying away with him the recollection of faces and voices which, though they spoke not absolutely the language of either, yet seemed in sweet alliance with all.

A subject of contemplation, whatever might be its nature, was but too likely to banish sleep from a pillow she had lately seldom deigned to visit: morning, of consequence, found the young man considerably worse than he had been the preceding evening; and Michelli, who missed him at the hour when chance usually brought them together, somewhat suddenly entered his chamber. A faint pleasure kindled on the cheek of the count, not unmingled however with surprise, accustomed as he had ever been to respectful attendance and distant homage. His proud and repulsive spirit nevertheless quickly stood abashed before a man who, though not wholly unacquainted with ceremony, used it only as the substitute for regard, and, in very simplicity of manners, dismissed the one as soon as his heart received the other. Michelli felt himself indeed interested alike by the situation and character of his new acquaintance, in whom he was surprised to find a degree of intelligence and knowledge not often to be met with even in those of maturer years; and, under the impulse of a first impression, he placed to the credit of nature, and a love of study, what was in fact the result of a highly-cultivated education.

In the hospitable and humane attentions of her father Josephine almost equally shared. Her heart had never yet obeyed any impulse save that communicated by his; nor did she attach either value or importance to those little offices of kindness she was now induced to show. The exterior of the count had not made that impression on her which in his brighter days it probably would have done. She had not seen him often, however, before she discovered that he was interesting and amiable: but sickness had robbed him of the graces of his person, and corroding reflections preyed on those of his mind: both gradually began to re-assert themselves.—Contemplated indeed thus,

——"in his calm of Nature,
"With all the gentler virtues brooding on him,"

it would have been hardly possible to believe he had been so lately the victim of intemperate pleasure and ungovernable passions. Far indeed was Josephine from suspecting it: the languor and melancholy that preyed upon him she imputed solely to affliction or ill health; and she insensibly began to look with tender and increasing sympathy on the sufferings of a man who had knowledge to command respect, and endowments that seemed to give him a claim to distinction.

If the society of the count was daily more agreeable to Josephine, to her father it soon became nearly indispensable. Michelli corresponded with almost every man of science in Europe; but, as the narrowness of his circumstances made heavy demands upon his time, his daughter frequently became his amanuensis. This office was at first shared, and at length wholly engrossed, by his young acquaintance. The count, besides being skilled in all the modern languages, wrote Latin with a fluency and correctness far exceeding the abilities of Michelli himself; nor were his acquirements contemptible, even in those branches of knowledge to which the other more particularly applied. The intercourse of mind, therefore, became every day cemented between them; preserving just those shades of difference which distinguish the disciple from the master: and if the modern Alcibiades fell short in talents and graces of the Grecian one, he was at least hardly less zealous or docile in his temporary pursuit of wisdom.

By a singular transition, the son of Count Siegendorf was now become a familiar guest at the frugal board and fireside of Michelli; and never did days pass to him so delightfully. His understanding there daily improved; his temper harmonized; the vigor of his person returned; —his passions, acting for the first time under the impulse of reason and virtue, gave just energy enough to his manners, to mark the features of his mind; and finally—in the contemplation of all—the heart of Josephine was irrecoverably lost.

During the state of convalescence and languor that had preceded this period, love was a passion that had rather stolen by degrees into the bosom of the count, than imperiously asserted a claim there; but its influence was not the less powerful. It now reigned despotically and unrivalled. In proportion as the inquietudes of passion began to seize upon him, he adverted, however, with more acute anxiety to his own real condition in life. Could he even have resolved to trample on the most sacred laws of hospitality or gratitude for the indulgence of his inclination, he felt that nothing short of systematical and consummate hypocrisy could afford him the remotest probability of success. The love of Josephine was a generous, tender, and genuine feeling, that looked out in her eyes, and spoke in her voice; but "no thought infirm altered her cheek:"—it was a feeling, that would have gone through the world with a deserving object, and encountered, without shrinking, every sorrow that world might inflict; but it would have withered before the breath of disgrace. The count, without being exactly able to calculate its force, yet felt its nature; and was deeply sensible that such a woman must be at once resigned, or honorably secured. Yet, that his father should consent to such an ill-assorted union, was an idea so extravagant, that he dared not for a moment indulge in it: and hers, though he might be tempted by the moderation of his wishes to bestow his daughter on an obscure and deserving young man, would most unquestionably withhold her from the libertine son of Count Siegendorf: one, whose character when known, would inspire no confidence, and whose age and rank would easily enable him to break through any tie not sanctioned by his family.

A temporary gloom again clouded the features and mind of the count; the question had been, indeed, decided in his own bosom, from the moment it became such; for, it had never yet made a part of his character to contend with any passion; much less did it now, when to yield seemed a virtue: But the manner in which he should present himself to Michelli; and, ah! the point still more difficult to decide, that in which he should address his daughter, became the constant subject of his meditations, and once more banished repose from his pillow. He now watched Josephine with such impassioned eyes, as taught her soul timidly to shrink into itself, and present to his anxious imagination and quick feelings an exterior of coldness that almost drove him to distraction. With a perturbed heart, he at length ventured to sound the opinion of Michelli. The philosopher paused upon it—like a philosopher—or, as the count rather thought, like the executioner who holds his axe suspended over the neck of the criminal. He answered at length, however, with his accustomed simplicity and plainness: He had conceived highly of the talents of the young man; he had no reason to doubt his conduct; of his family he was but little solicitous to inquire: for the story of misfortune and emigration presented to him at the first period of their acquaintance, when, as it seemed, no interested purpose could possibly be served by it, he never suspected could be other than true: but he was a philosopher of the latter ages; and though he lived chiefly among the stars, he was aware that a little terrestrial provision was necessary towards the support of a household, however simple its plan. To this objection, the young man was already prepared with an answer. Previous to his explanation with Michelli, he had had the precaution to convert many valuable jewels into money, which he lodged safely in respectable hands; and though, as the son of Count Siegendorf, poverty had long stared him in the face, he was not indigent when considered only as the future son-in-law of Michelli. For the first time in his life, too, he now ventured to hint that he had talents —education:—and was rendered modest enough by love to be surprised, when he found the plea admitted. Michelli referred him finally to his daughter—and, in so doing, seemed to the over-wrought mind of the count to sign his death-warrant. He did not long, however, continue thus diffident; the passion that animated him, soon found or made its opportunity; and Josephine was too much overwhelmed with the consciousness of her own feelings, to be able to conceal from him that he was beloved beyond his most sanguine expectations.—Michelli soon after bestowed the hand of his daughter on the heir of Count Siegendorf, without knowing that he was raising her to a rank the proudest in the city would have envied;

—that he was consigning her to a fate the humblest might pity.

Time did not render the count indifferent to the blessing thus conferred. It continued to revolve; he became a father, and, in becoming so, the recollection of his own was forcibly awakened. For near six years all that had past on his native soil had been to him a blank; he now looked often on Josephine and his son, and anxiously wished that he could have transplanted them thither. Alas! the dangerous wish was one day to be most fatally indulged! the tranquil and philosophic ease in which he lived, nevertheless, for a considerable period subdued it; but it returned with accumulated force, and acquired every day fresh activity from a thousand remote and incidental feelings, which, however, all tended to one object. The radical fault of his character was yet far from being extirpated: for whether under the influence of virtuous or illicit passions, whether reveling in the courts of princes, or living in the bosom of frugality and temperence, it was *self*, and self only, that had hitherto guided all his actions; and even at a crisis, when he was willing to believe that filial duty and honor gave rise to his returning sensibility, it was strangely compounded of that pride and self-love the avenging angel had not yet wrung out of his heart.

After long and deep reflection, he at length ventured to address his father. His letter was couched in mysterious terms, but they were those of contrition. That he had still much to be forgiven was evident; yet such was the confusion of his mind while writing, and his consciousness that in his union with Josephine—prejudice apart—he had nothing to blush for, that his expressions seemed to announce him proud of some unexplained offence, and more disposed to assert his rights than to atone for his follies. He had, however, no cause to suppose the letter reached its destination. The apprehension that his personal liberty might be endangered by a discovery of the place of his abode induced him to send it through a very circuitous channel, and war raged throughout all Germany with too much fury to excite any reasonable surprise at its failure. It was long, nevertheless, before he persuaded himself it had failed. The interval was filled with impatient expectation—broken starts—deep reveries in which his wife could have no share, and which insensibly stole him from her arms and her society. She often perceived a strange anxiety and perturbation in his countenance that irresistibly communicated its influence to her heart; but though she had no reason to doubt his love, there was at those moments a haughty and repulsive fierceness in his temper that alike threw soothing and expostulation at a distance.

Where the error of her choice had been, Josephine was at a loss to discover—but she felt she had erred. Gifted as her husband appeared by nature—graced by education—passionately attached to her—suitable in years—and accordant in tastes, she yet became painfully sensible that she was mis-matched. Long indeed might she have sought the cause—for no feeling in her own bosom had ever yet taught her that a mind ill at peace with itself must inevitably scatter a blight on the minds of all around.

But Siegendorf was, at length, no longer master of his emotions or his secret: of the whole circle of human failings, deceit was the one least congenial to his nature; and in a furious conflict of self-reproach and impatience, he poured out at once to Michelli and his daughter the extraordinary story in which they were so deeply involved. Astonishment seemed for a time to suspend the faculties of both. Michelli, alarmed, flattered, and grieved, hardly knew what was the predominant sentiment of his mind. Alas! Josephine knew too well that of hers. A dream of grandeur and magnificence did, indeed, transiently glitter before her eyes, as the phantoms were presented there; and she perceived, by the detail of her husband, that all of either which ambition could covet was probably included in her gains; it was for her heart only to calculate its losses; and that at once told her the immeasurable difference between them. She had given her hand to a man gifted, as she believed, by nature beyond his fortunes; she perceived, on the contrary, she had united herself to one who debased them. In the simplicity of her first choice she had been every thing to her husband:—she was now only one of many objects, and perhaps in the end the least valued. Ill-omened did the exchange appear to her, from content to magnificence: and for the first time in her life, the very softness and diffidence of her nature made her unjust; for she imputed all the singularity of his late conduct to repentance, and all his repentance to her own want of desert. Judgment and consciousness, however, soon rectified the error of her heart. Without trying the past by what might probably be a fastidious refinement, she saw it was her duty to extract happiness from the future. The conduct of her husband rendered it evident that she had been passionately beloved by him; and when she weighed it with his past life and modes of thinking, she saw with modest wonder how greatly she had been esteemed. There was no reason to suspect that the sentiments she had once inspired could possibly be extinguished in his bosom, even if they had undergone a temporary suspension; they might yet, therefore, be rendered a source of happiness to both: or rather, she felt that, if they became such to him, her own would be sufficiently ascertained.

Those feelings and perplexities which had been very indistinctly expressed by the count, presented themselves meantime, at full to the cool judgment of Michelli. It was clear to him, indeed, that the letter had probably never reached Prague; but it was not easy to determine whether, if it had, the event would have been fortunate. He perceived at once the only evil that had escaped the imagination of Josephine—the possibility of her husband making peace at the expense of her honor. All that a tender heart could picture to afflict itself hers, indeed, had for the moment presented; but nothing that could degrade the object of its fondest affections: nor would even the voice of her father have been heard probably on that subject without indignation.—Michelli spared her the grievous and humiliating idea, by addressing himself, where he believed he ought, to her husband. But he had yet known only half the character of the man to whom he spoke. That fiery and rebellious spirit, which brooked not control from his own father, revolted to its first nature at the remotest thought of it in hers. Conceiving at once all the extent of Michelli's surmises, however cautiously they were expressed, the count was not just enough to feel that his own deceit had incurred the indignity, and he resented it with the same turbulent disdain that so often marked his conduct. Michelli was justly roused to anger. They parted on ill terms. The count retired to his own apartments to deliberate, and his determination, as before, was fatal to his honor.

To abandon Josephine or her child, would never, probably, in his worst moments, have occurred to him; for he was not a villain—if the man who always first considers himself can be securely deemed otherwise. In this case, however, it was a crime to which he had no temptation; for he fondly loved her; nor was he less attached to his son. Even for Michelli he had the most unqualified esteem: but of the mode of making either of them happy or prosperous his imperious temper directed him to render himself sole judge. Among various methods of subduing his father's heart, the count had ever deemed one to be infallible—a personal appeal. It was a project he had long secretly meditated, and almost resolved on; but to which he now believed it impossible that, under the impression Michelli had conceived of his designs, he should consent: nor could he be assured that Josephine herself, guided by her father's judgment, would not vehemently oppose his departure.—To effect it, therefore, within four-and-twenty hours seemed the only easy method of effecting it at all. Little preparation was necessary, and hardly any thing but secrecy indispensable. Night was already far advanced. He stole softly to the chamber of his wife, and perceived that care and long watching had at length buried her in a profound sleep. He kissed her, and might have exclaimed with Othello:

> "Oh balmy breath! Almost thou dost persuade
> Justice to break her sword!"———

for justice, by a strange perversion of his better reason, he believed it, thus at once to punish the injurious suspicions of Michelli, and, by the most summary proceeding, attest his own honor. Morning at length appeared, and found his resolution fixed. He forgot his first fatal flight from his father; he forgot the instability of his own character; he forgot every thing that ought to have restrained him, and in evil hour he turned his back upon the gates of Hamburg!

The count had not, however, proceeded many leagues before tenderness and a more correct sense of equity began to struggle in his bosom. He half suspected his own measures of being precipitate: he was at least sure they admitted of misconstruction. He pictured to himself the overwhelming grief of Josephine, and even the silent consternation of her philosophic father.—Though unable to resolve on the humiliation of returning, he stopped at the nearest post-town, and from thence he wrote to his wife. All that language could convey, either tender or generous, was expressed in his letter. Most earnestly he conjured her to guard both her health and peace unimpaired till his return. He represented his absence to be such as he really hoped it would prove—beneficial and temporary. He committed their beloved boy to her wise and maternal protection, with fatherly fondness and unlimited confidence. It was their united claims he solemnly protested that he was now journeying to secure, and his own filial duties which though late, he was about to fulfill. He concluded with drawing a flattering picture of the affluence and felicity a reconciliation with his father would ensure their future lives: nor did he, now that the momentary resentment he had felt towards Michelli was partly subsided, omit to make that honorable mention of him to which, by his virtues and relative situation, he was entitled. Such was the letter of the count! Alas! when language without being insincere grows thus eloquent, the exquisitely discerning heart too often traces in it only the overflowings of a conscience yet unseared; that thus compromises with itself, and spends the wholesome vigor of the mind in exhausting and deceitful effusions of sensibility!—If such were the feelings of Josephine, obedience, that saddest or most sweet of duties, yet taught her to conceal them. She calmed her brow to Michelli: she took her son with aching fondness to that bosom her husband had deserted; and strove to find in rectitude and hope a balm for evils she saw no rational mode of remedying.

But whatever might be the sincerity of the count in the tender professions he made his wife,—and in those he *was* sincere,—the reflections that writing naturally tended to produce had insensibly rendered him less sanguine as to the success of his own projects. Those reflections now told him, that from the moment he set foot in his native country he could no longer consider himself as a free agent; since even if his past transgressions did not render him amenable to that country, of which the crisis when he quitted it made him doubtful, he was at least certain that the limits of parental authority would be enlarged to the uttermost by that of the public: and to what, should his father prove inflexible, might not such authority extend?—it might tear him for ever from Josephine and his son; it might violate every tie either sacred or delightful; and render him of necessity the very villain Michelli had more than half suspected he would prove. What plea had he to offer that might obviate these probable evils, or subdue at once the resentment of a father whom he had so long either neglected or defied?—simply the influence of his presence, and the weight of his promises: and now, for the first time, his self-love vanished before the idea of the former, and his self-delusion before that of the latter. At every pause in his journey he looked back with more restless anxiety on those he had left, and forward to those he was approaching. Pride, honor, love, every thing dear to him, was included in the event; and where the stake is so mighty, he must be a daring adventurer indeed who trembles not to cast the die!—A circumstance wholly unlooked for at once gave a new color to his fate.

The count's journey was of necessity tedious and indirect, as the horrors of war every where obstructed or followed him: his route, therefore, included the town to which he had requested that the answer he had flattered himself with receiving from his father, might, under a fictitious name, be addressed; but the channels of correspondence were at that period ever uncertain, except in great commercial cities: the state of the country rendered them still more so; and as near two years had elapsed from the time he had written, his inquiries, hitherto fruitless, now seemed almost irrational: yet that restlessness which still attends incertitude induced him to renew them. The postmaster paused a few moments; examined a small drawer that appeared full of discarded papers, and then, to his astonishment, produced a letter, the superscription of which he instantly knew to be the writing of his father. Could that father have seen the breathless impatience with which he tore it open, he would probably have fallen on his neck, and believed he had indeed found his son again. The date of the letter was not very far back, and the first lines of it expressed surprise at that of his own, which appeared to have been nearly lost, and very long retarded. A tender inference was, however, obviously to be drawn from the various precautions that seemed to have been taken to preserve the answer from failing: it was written from the camp.

Count Siegendorf passed over, in gentle, but dignified terms, that part of his son's letter on which he could not rely: but though he had, unhappily, little confidence in his professions, he spoke with sensibility of the returning consciousness of duty and honor which dictated them. He demanded, however, to be informed most explicitly of the nature and extent of the offences he was called upon to pardon. "The narrative," he observed—and the observation was not made without an expression of the most impassioned regret, "now included the events of years; but on his part he was prepared to temper the severity of a judge with the indulgence and patience of a father. As he was not aware of the reasons that had induced his son to change his name, he highly praised the delicacy that led him to renounce, rather than continue to disgrace it. He adverted in strong though broken starts of tenderness to the hour when that name might resume its first splendor; but he peremptorily forbade him ever to appear in his native country till such an hour arrived. Finally, he touched upon his son's pecuniary resources, and desired him to name the spot whither such remittances might be made as his exigencies could not but require."

And now again the heart of the young man beat high with habitual self-applause and congratulation. Plunged as he had just before been in a gloom almost approaching to despondency, with a sensibility yet aching under the recent loss of all dear to him, and an imagination prompt to magnify every possible evil, he rushed at once into the contrary extreme. Far from seeing in his father's letter what he justly might—a mind self-balanced, and prepared to make, if necessary, a desperate sacrifice to honor, he dwelt only on the tender passages of it; and believed he discerned in them a thousand struggling though half-suppressed feelings, which his answer, for he answered it on the spot, would, he flattered himself, render unconquerable.

The enthusiasm of the moment could not but dictate more of promise than detail. He avowed, indeed, the circumstance of his marriage, and the birth of his son; and he was careful to satisfy the pride or the prejudices of the count, by an assurance that the family from which Josephine sprang was such as did not attach disgrace to his own. The remainder of the letter consisted of a solemn asseveration of his sincerity; of the temperance and simplicity long since established in his modes of life; and on the unshaken fidelity with which he meant to fulfill all his engagements. The tenor of the whole was, indeed, well calculated to raise the hopes and expectations of a fond parent to the most sanguine pitch: it was dated from the spot on which it was written; and he concluded by saying, that he should pursue his journey as far as Cassel, "there to attend the further orders of his father, and to receive testimonies of his kindness in any way he should deem it suitable to offer them."

The event which had thus intoxicated his heart remained to be related to Josephine. Ah, why could he not press her to his bosom!—read in her eyes the sweet participation of his hopes, and communicate them by that intuitive and sympathetic power which leaves language so far behind! He was sensible that the letter he addressed to her, though the honest effusion of his own heart, was not such as could create unmixed pleasure in hers. The glaring colors with which his imagination painted the future were calculated imperceptibly to throw into shade the retired and humble happiness of the past; and, by a peculiarity with which he had tinged his own fate, he felt that he could not exult in the distinction he was to bestow, without involuntarily taking something from that he had received.

Refinements which are only the effect of capricious sensibility do not often produce much real disquiet. His, was "the perfume and suppliance of a moment." Again the awakened consciousness of youth and prosperity began to beat in every pulse. Nature, as he pursued his journey, seemed to have changed her aspect to him: the forms of pleasure floated indistinctly before his eyes; and a tumultuous crowd of long-buried sensations and habits revived in his bosom. In the security of receiving remittances from his father, he drew out of the hands of the banker at Hamburg that provision lodged there for his wife and son. His pride loudly demanded an indemnification for the privations it had long undergone, and unfortunately it soon received one too ample. He had hardly presented himself at Cassel before he was recognized by several young men of his own rank and age for the son of Count Siegendorf, and as it was not doubted, from his appearance and expenditure, that he was licensed in the past, all the seductions of dissipation and bad example were held out in the present. A memorable period succeeded!—youth, habit, self-indulgence, again too fatally prevailed;—and the husband of Josephine, ten thousand times more criminal in that character than he had ever been before, relapsed into those vices which had already made a wreck of his honor and his peace. Amidst the excesses which now threatened finally to destroy both, he was even indiscreet enough to forget all the importance attached by his father to the renunciation of his name. He did not indeed formally resume it; but he was sufficiently willing that his rank should be acknowledged; and it was too necessary a claim in the circle he mingled with not to become generally so.

Four months rolled away in excesses which, with his usual self-complacency, he persuaded himself were venial, as he was fully resolved the summons from his father should end them. Whenever that arrived, he solemnly promised his own heart to abjure all pleasure incongruous with his duties—to live only for Josephine and his family, and to limit his follies for ever. It was so long ere any intelligence reached him from Prague, that he almost began to doubt some second delay, more unexpected than the first, had attended his letter. The answer to it at length arrived, and his follies were, indeed, for ever limited;—but, unhappily, by no forbearance or virtue of his own. Contrary to his expectation, the packet was addressed to him by the name and titles of his family; as though the flaming indignation of his father disdained all concealment, and was willing to announce itself at the first glance.

Count Siegendorf, in the most pointed terms, and such as bespoke him well acquainted with all that was passing at Cassel, at once renounced a son to whom it was evident no promise was sacred; "who had flattered his hopes only the more grossly to betray them; who had sported with the name of his family again to disgrace it; who was alive to no feeling of duty, no principle of honor; and whom time and misfortune, far from reforming, had only taught duplicity." He enjoined him, as he valued his liberty, never again to venture within the limits of Bohemia, much less dare to appear in his presence. He concluded with saying, that, "worthless as he feared the scion might prove of such a stem, he was nevertheless willing to receive the little Conrad, and secure for him those claims he was born to, under the express condition that his parents should see him no more. That if they acceded to these terms, he would remit to his son an annual provision; but if otherwise, he disclaimed him for ever."

From the day this letter was received, the character and manners of the young count seemed to undergo a total alteration. He believed himself grossly injured by his father, and he conceived a resentment likely to end but with the life of one of them. His mind, untuned for pleasure, for ever revolted from it: he remained several weeks buried in meditation; at the expiration of that time he departed abruptly from Cassel, and wrote to Josephine to meet him, with Conrad, within a few leagues' distance of Hamburg. The fate he had prepared for himself weighed heavily upon his soul, and seemed at once to have absorbed all its softer feelings: there was not justice enough in that soul to point the accusation where it ought to have fallen; and he regarded the event as unprecedented and intolerable. To remain for life only the son-in-law of Michelli was an idea that even his darkest contemplations had never presented to him; yet such was now the probable conclusion of his fate. The manner of his father's letter left him without a doubt that he would, if further irritated, execute the resolution he announced, and, vested with that power the states would easily put into his hand against a son they did not esteem, make over the honors of the family to the collateral branch, which centered in Baron Stralenheim; a native of Franconia, and nearly allied on the female side to the house of Siegendorf. The simple, but hateful medium his father had proposed, could alone, therefore, stand between him and final ruin. But how was Josephine to encounter a blow every way thus cruel? or how was a husband to relate to her the fatal consequence of his own accumulated indiscretions? It is among the great evils of misconduct to harden the heart, and it had hardened that of the count. Yet on this side he was not yet invulnerable. Another motive, however, even more urgent than any yet considered, impelled his decision. Circumstanced as he now found himself, it was not possible for him to replace that sum which, relying on the liberality of his father, he had imprudently lavished. Yet that sum, lately deemed so insignificant, was mighty now in his account of life. For was he to return to Hamburg a poor dependent on the bounty of Michelli? Or could he become a hireling, and give to his wife and child the scanty bread of poverty? Misery—inevitable—intolerable misery, seemed to environ him on every side. But there was a point in his character at which it ever repelled the arrow from himself, though at the expense of all around; even now, in the very crisis of self-condemnation and shame, concentrating, as it were, to that point all the harsher and more stubborn feelings of his nature, he prepared to meet Josephine and Michelli with a firmness that should alike exclude expostulation or reproach, by showing that his decision, whatever it might prove, would be irrevocable, and that he would be responsible for his conduct to no being but himself.

He had only to see Josephine to be convinced that he might have chosen, if a more upright, yet a no less indulgent judge.—She, as well as Conrad, was in deep mourning, and he learnt, with that acute and unexpected pang which ever attends the death of those we believe we have injured, that Michelli was no more. He died as he had lived, in peace with his God and with mankind. Dismissing all resentment against the count, he left him the sole goods he had to bequeath—his daughter, his pardon, and his blessing. In parting with Josephine, however, even the gentle and philosophic habits of his temper were almost inadequate towards supporting the firmness of either. To her bosom he had long since communicated all the pure and noble qualities of his own: he had nothing more to give!—they parted therefore as those who were to meet again, and to know each other by the sympathetic influence of the virtues and affections.—The count was not insensible to this short and simple detail: but it was now no season for indulging the softer sensibilities of life. With Michelli was buried the last hope of saving Josephine and her son from impending separation: for so desperate had been his own plans, that he had more than once thought of silently renouncing both, and, by plunging into a military career, however obscure, either save himself from the disgrace that seemed attached to existence, or the guilt of voluntarily ending it.

Again the tender influence of Josephine was employed in expelling the corrosive reflections that preyed upon the heart of her husband. Rising vigorously with the occasion, she endeavored to recall both to his imagination and her own those brilliant pictures of the future he had himself once presented to her. They were now, indeed, to be realised only in the person of their son; but would they be therefore less valued?—Conrad, removed from their protection, would be but the more dear to their affections! On her part she could resolve, with matron firmness, to resign him to a fate prosperous beyond what the cruelty of theirs allowed them to hope they could bestow; and if their own were less dazzling, she tenderly reminded her husband of those days when magnificence formed no part of their plan of happiness. The count listened in silence: he strove to assent; he would willingly have concealed from every human being that he could not without reluctance resign, even to his son, that place in society he had in his own person so wantonly thrown away, nor give to his father a blessing of which he was to deprive himself. The mind of Josephine was too acute, however, not to discern the latent rankling principle. But she buried the consciousness deeply in her own bosom, and with it all those afflicting sentiments the character and conduct of Siegendorf could not but create.—Conrad was something more than eight years of age, when he was at length delivered up to the care of his grandfather: the latter was punctual to his engagements; and though the income of the count was moderate, it was such as supplied every demand save that of luxury.

The career of dissipation now closed:—and so silent was the progress of life, that time and fate seemed stationary. Josephine could still indeed occasionally beguile the hours of her husband; but neither time, nor circumstance, nor love itself, ever restored to him his former character. He was habitually morose and abstracted; animal spirits and youth no longer danced through his veins, and he had no store of pleasurable ideas that should supply their place. Occupied in gloomy meditation, he turned his eyes incessantly back to the brilliant horizon of his early life, and murmured at the span to which it was contracted. The birth and growth of another son somewhat meliorated these feelings; but, by a strange perverseness in his nature, the count never loved Marcellin with the fondness he had shown for Conrad: while Josephine, on the contrary, seemed anxious to indemnify herself for the loss of one son by cherishing a double portion of fondness for the other.—The secret storm of the passions at length slowly subsided in the bosom of her husband; who, fixed in his fate, fallen from his fortunes, soured to the present good, and only at intervals stealing from her eyes that gleam of sunshine and of hope they ever communicated, presented to indifferent observers merely a common character and a common lot.

But though the years immediately succeeding that gloomy one which seemed to fix the fate of the count passed thus apparently in torpor, they were secretly marked by various transitions of opinion and feeling. As the colors of the past became less vivid, his mind dwelt with more deep and intense contemplation on the prospect of the future. In the death of his father he still saw the probability, the almost certainty, of a change in his situation that could not but restore him to his natural rights, by leaving no other competitor for them than a son, whose tender age would ill calculate him for a contest. Count Siegendorf was far advanced in life, and had never been vigorous: a day, an hour, therefore, might settle the great account between them—but days and hours fly not according to the calculations of man!—insensibly they swelled into years, and brought with them no change. The young count felt his confidence in the future diminish: even the death of a parent, a circumstance which he dared hardly own to himself he desired, might no longer bring with it the advantage which alone could render it desirable! Years still continued to revolve, and the event of the future became daily more problematical. At length that proud and rebellious spirit which long forbade him to make any further effort with his father, chiefly, perhaps, because he believed the authority of that father must soon inevitably terminate, gave way before the probability of its devolving to a son fast approaching to manhood. He contemplated with bitter and ceaseless regret the still increasing interval during which some favorable moment might doubtless have been found to soothe an indignation his forbearance had perpetuated, and recall to himself feelings now probably centred for ever in Conrad!

It had been among the voluntary engagements of Count Siegendorf, to inform Josephine and her husband if their son were either sick or dead.—No such intelligence ever reached them. Conrad was well, then!—he was great—perhaps happy!—No tender yearnings recalled the memory of his boyish days! his parents were to him as nothing!—he made not any effort to see—to hear of them!—they languished in obscurity, and in a fondness that knew no fruition, while he reveled in every thing that fortune or fondness could bestow!—If these reflections corroded the heart of the father through a thousand avenues, they were not excluded even from the tender and generous one of Josephine. At a crisis when her husband's peace was at stake, she had, indeed, heroically dared to part with her son;—but to lose him for ever brought with it a pang that shook her utmost fortitude. For the first time in her life she envied Count Siegendorf; and, like her husband, looked with longing and anxious eyes towards that only spot whence both were alike excluded.

During the latter years of the count's residence at Hamburg, it was among his additional grievances that the man whose name had been held forward to him on an occasion he could never remember without bitterness of spirit, had taken up his abode in that neighborhood. Baron Stralenheim he had reason to know was the person formerly deputed by his father to watch his actions, and restrain them, if possible, by the hand of authority.

Years had passed since that time, and there was no reason to suppose that Stralenheim had any longer any influence over his fate. But the resentment and disdain once conceived against the latter ever engendered a deep distrust in the mind of the count. No two beings on earth could seem however more distinct from each other than they now appeared to be. The count had never since the period of his marriage, and even some months preceding it, borne his own name—the fatal period excepted he had passed so indiscreetly at Cassel, where, though he claimed it not, it was generally given him. He was not sure that the baron knew his assumed one; and certainly the residence of the latter at Hamburg seemed to have no reference to his: yet it was singular that he should reside there! the circumstance of his doing so, for he was a man of stately and reserved habits, came to the count's ear by what nevertheless appeared a mere accident.

In the household of the baron there was an Italian of the name of Giulio; a Piedmontese, who had resided many years at Hamburg, during the life of Michelli; and though in an obscure situation, and not precisely of the same country with the latter, yet, being a man of ingenuity, was very well known to him. Josephine, to whom every one was in some degree dear that recalled the memory of her father, never failed to notice Giulio when he fell in her way; and when that did not happen, a sentiment of grateful respect induced him sometimes to inquire after her. On this man the count had fixed a suspicious eye; but he saw him very rarely, and nothing appeared in his conduct, to justify the idea of his being a spy.

The strange and inexplicable feeling which superstition terms presentiment, was, nevertheless, singularly allied to reality, in the case of the count. The residence of Baron Stralenheim had, in fact, that very reference to his which he suspected; and, could he indeed have looked into the future, he would have known the latter to be, of all existing beings, the one most portentous to his future life! Of this they were alike ignorant: nor was it possible either should yet suspect the dark shadow they were mutually to cast over each other's fate! Giulio was, nevertheless, no instrument in the hands of the baron, who was even unsuspicious of the opportunity that offered of making him such. Stralenheim was a man of a phlegmatic character, and a narrow mind. He had spent one half of his life in the service, because fortune had placed him there; but he had no taste for glory; and he had retired to spend the remainder in the country, with as little taste for that. He loved, however, the petty dignity attached to his family and alliances; and surveyed with much satisfaction a Gothic chateau, situated in a marsh, and flanked with avenues of worm-eaten timber, because its precincts were his own.

From this dream of solitary and insignificant grandeur he had been suddenly waked some years before, by a remote expectation of the inheritance of Siegendorf: the magnitude of the object was such as might have roused a more torpid mind; and it accorded too well with the propensities of his, not to call forth all his attention. His hopes had, however, been frustrated before they could reasonably be called such. The count, ever indulgently leaning towards his son, had almost instantaneously repented the measures dictated by temporary resentment, and had therefore withdrawn, as he believed, from the hands of Stralenheim all power of injuring him. But Stralenheim was a man of cold and deliberate purpose: not easily kindled to pursuit, but tenacious of his object; and as he perceived the count to be wholly devoid of suspicion respecting him, he had address enough craftily to retain the power, though he could not calculate exactly when, or how he should use it. The adoption of Conrad had appeared a far more fatal blow to his hopes than any reconciliation with Conrad's father: yet even this did not wholly extinguish them; for he was of a temperament that enabled them to be permanent, without being active. Imposing on himself, therefore, just as much restraint as should keep him within the sphere of the count, whose assumed name was the very one that exposed him to danger, Stralenheim waited patiently the slow aid of time and occasion.—Such was the enemy that hung over the head of the unhappy Siegendorf! an avenging instrument, as it seemed, in the hand of Heaven, ready forcibly to precipitate the scale of misery downwards, whenever error or misfortune should drop their weight into the balance.—An event, that had nothing to do with the calculations of either party, seemed, precisely at this period, on the point of overturning those of both.

Twelve years had rolled away since the departure of Conrad. The income of the count had been regularly paid in that interval; and as he relied on its increase whenever his father died, either by the accession of himself or his son, the caution of Josephine had never been able to prevent his expending it, even improvidently. With a feeling that partook at once of incredulity and amazement, he learned that it was no longer to be remitted to him. His father, then, was dead!—Ah no!—the prohibition was signed by his hand. The eyes of the distracted son perused the billet, and his memory too well authenticated the writing. That cruel fever, which afterwards incorporated itself with his constitution, seized at once upon his pulse—his brain—his heart! Long and painful was the struggle between life and death—but the vigor of constitution prevailed: he at length recovered, and found himself almost a beggar! An act of cruelty so extravagant as that of impoverishing an only son, could not, however, be without a motive. No excesses had now disgraced the tenor of his life, no arrogant assumption of name that of his family. At a crisis, when the bitterness of despair had nearly overwhelmed Josephine, these considerations had, nevertheless, inspired her with fortitude enough to take the only step that could avert it. Blending the dignity of her natural character with the sensibility of a wife and a mother, she ventured, in language rendered exquisitely touching by the occasion, to address that respected father-in-law whom she had yet never seen. She wrote also to her son.

The sullen despondency which first seized the count on his recovery, yet yielded to a feeble impression of hope, on learning the measure pursued by his wife. He consented to live; but his imagination bounded the term of life, though he refused it not as a temporary gift. As yet, indeed, he believed it to be an uncertain one, from the mere languor and feebleness which succeeded indisposition. He was dozing one evening on a small couch Josephine had drawn for him to the fireside, when, roused by an indistinct murmur of voices, he raised his eyes, and perceived she was talking with a man in the ante-room. A second glance showed him it was Giulio. Agitated by that association of ideas which had long haunted him with respect to the latter, he inquired his business: the man was abashed; the languid air of Josephine, so different from that which was habitual to her, had already inspired in him an embarrassment common to timid and uncourtly minds, not accustomed to set the feelings of others at defiance: he was conscious of intrusion, and, in a voice of apology, explained his errand: it was simply to inform Josephine that he was on the point of returning to Italy; to inquire if she had any thing that demanded his service there; and modestly to request, as a token of her regard, a few mathematical instruments of little value, that had been made by Michelli. Again, the count was struck as with some inexplicable relation to his own fate, in so sudden and unexpected a departure.

"For what reason," he asked, "did Giulio, at that crisis, quit Hamburg?"

"Baron Stralenheim had dismissed his household, and was about to undertake a long journey."—Josephine found the self-possession her husband wanted, and inquired, though not without some emotion—"Whither?"

"He was not quite certain; he believed it was to Prague; he was at least sure it was as far as Bohemia."—The silence that followed this reply was unnoticed by Giulio, who saw in the questions put to him nothing but a condescending civility that strove to efface the coldness of his first reception; it was his part, he conceived, to show that he felt it so, by prolonging the conversation.

"Baron Stralenheim," he continued, "is neither very communicative nor very generous. Were he the latter, he would probably not dismiss his suite: for he is going, I am told, to take possession of the rich inheritance of Count Siegendorf."

"Siegendorf is alive!" exclaimed the agitated count, in a voice he found it impossible to control.

"At least—his grandson," added Josephine; and she too faltered, struck with a thousand painful recollections; and with the cruel possibility of even that being a doubt.

"The count himself unquestionably is dead," replied Giulio; "the baron seems to think little of the claims of his grandson, whose legitimacy he says is dubious; the inheritance is at least worth a struggle—and he is not, therefore, the man to part with it."

To the heart and imagination of the count and his wife these few words summed up the history of years; perhaps of all that remained to them in existence: they touched at length, then, the final point at which they were to stand or fall; and how did it find them provided for the contest? —sick—miserable—impoverished!—blighted, as it appeared, by a father's dying curse—since his last cruel prohibition was hardly less; and uncherished by that only being on whom they could rest a hope. For what was become of Conrad? why did he not now seek them? was he the victim of some secret machination on the part of Stralenheim? or was he reveling in the inheritance of his father, and unconscious of the storm that impended over himself; —Whatever might be his fate, his character, or his sentiments, it was at least evident that his parents were as necessary to his future welfare as he could be to theirs: since what besides their personal appearance could legitimate his birth against the claims of a crafty and powerful competitor! One only doubt invalidated the importance of these mighty questions; and that doubt was quickly removed, for a very short inquiry authenticated to the count the intelligence of his father's death—Giulio having received all his information on the subject from Stralenheim's secretary, who had himself read the letter from Prague that announced it.

In the tumult of contending hopes, fears, and sorrow, that naturally took possession of the bosoms of Josephine and her husband at a crisis thus important, it afforded at least a gleam of satisfaction to the latter to perceive by the open communication of Giulio, and the surprise as well as interest he expressed on finding his hearers some way implicated in it, that his visits had certainly no connection with any project entertained by Stralenheim: the latter, therefore, it was possible, might be wholly ignorant in whose neighborhood he dwelt; it was highly to be desired that he should remain so: Giulio was therefore strictly cautioned on the subject; and, as the immediate departure of the count and his wife seemed the only step likely to ascertain their security or rights in life, it became necessary to consider by what means the journey could be undertaken. Bitterly did the count now lament his own habitual extravagance, and his reliance on a future that had so often deceived him, when he felt that it had robbed him of those supplies, which, on the present occasion, were absolutely indispensable; and, united with his sickness, had left him worse than poor. The sole method that presented itself of providing for the expenses of a long and dangerous journey was by parting with every valuable they possessed: in so doing they made, indeed, no great sacrifice, for they possessed nothing that they believed would be henceforward either necessary or useful to them; but the manner in which the business was to be transacted was a circumstance of far more difficulty than the business itself; and in this they had again recourse to Giulio, whose condition and modes of life rendered his personal service no degradation. Through his means they privately converted, though to a great disadvantage, every thing that could be easily disposed of into money; after which, taking such precautions as might enable them to appear like travelers in an humble, but decent rank of life, the count and Josephine at length turned their steps towards Bohemia.

In the Palatinate and Upper Saxony war raged with a fury the effects of which were not to be calculated: and though Swedish and other troops covered the north, they were less hostile, and, not being actuated by civil discord, less bloody than elsewhere. No method, therefore, of reaching Bohemia appeared so certain as that of passing into Silesia; which, for the most part, united in the same cause with the latter, and at all times strongly incorporated in its policy and views, afforded the safest passage to emigrants of different descriptions. The count was, on the whole, sufficiently acquainted with the country; and, though yet feeble and ill able to sustain a journey of such extent, he was not less impelled by the necessity of the occasion to undertake it, than invigorated by the persuasion that his suspicions with regard to Stralenheim had been those of an irritable mind; and that, in reality, the latter neither knew him under his assumed name, nor kept any watch over his footsteps.

The security in which the count believed himself was, nevertheless, the precursor of danger. Stralenheim was informed of every material step taken by the former; and he was well pleased to see him quit Hamburg, where it would have been difficult, if not dangerous, to make any attack to his personal freedom without the most unquestionable authority: whereas, in the insignificant towns through which he must necessarily travel, that with which the baron had provided himself might, by the power of gold, be made to act in full force: and as it was particularly authentic within the territories of the House of Brandenburg, it was the purpose of Stralenheim to attack him near some fortress within that limit; where, being himself a military man, he did not doubt but he should find such connivance as might enable him, if not to effect the count's confinement for life, at least to secure him for a period sufficiently long to give his adversary every advantage he could desire.

Ingenious as craft may be, it is perhaps never so much in danger of being defeated as when it encounters the suspicious timidity which results from a consciousness of error and a premature knowledge of life. The count, throughout the progress of his journey, had little else to do but to think and to consider. A singularity that occasionally marked the interrogations put to him, at different barriers, together with observing the countenance of an individual who had crossed him more than once, again awakened the latent jealousy of his nature. He had too much at stake, and was become habitually too profoundly meditative, not to guard against the remotest danger, except such as was merely personal and accidental, to which he was ever indifferent. That he now looked to was of a more important nature: he could not, indeed, ascertain that there was any: but he suspected it,—and to suspect it was enough. At a point of his journey, therefore, when a deviation from it could least be guessed at, he suddenly struck through the by-roads of a forest, once more changed his name to that of Kruitzner, and felt assured that he had, for a time at least, escaped all observation. Here, however, ended his good fortune. The way he had taken was circuitous and fatiguing; his health was again attacked; his little means daily diminished; subsistence, hope, life itself, seemed hourly fading from his grasp, and he was set down in the obscure shelter afforded him by his host at M——, with only the last lingering sparks of either remaining.

Afflicting as his fate there continued to be, yet in his calculations with regard to the baron he had fortunately not been deceived: the route he had taken was one through which the latter had neither directed his inquiries nor his measures; but Stralenheim, though foiled, was not easily defeated; he well knew the count's method of traveling was too humble and economical to carry him further than certain regular distances, and on this he had reckoned even at the time of his own departure from Hamburg; for though he had not quitted that city till several days after his competitor, of the rapidity of whose proceedings he had not been sufficiently aware, he was convinced that the influence of money would bring him soon within track, and enable him to be near enough to enforce his measures whenever he judged it prudent to set them in motion. In this, however, the baron made a false estimate of his own character; for he was not generous; neither, though persevering, was he active: his journey, therefore, was not pursued with the celerity he expected; and though he had sufficient reason to know he kept his object in view, he did not come up with him. The address with which the count changed his name and route, defeated the plans, and arrested the progress of the baron, who was then at Frankfort on the Oder. It was of the first importance to him that the immediate heir to the estates of Siegendorf should be prevented, for a time at least, from appearing on his patrimonial lands, either to assert his own claims or establish the validity of his son's: if, therefore, he had wholly escaped the baron, the journey of the latter was useless, and afforded too little ground of hope to induce him to continue it; since the inheritance it might be easy for him to take possession of, it would be impossible to recover. To these considerations all others gave way, and Stralenheim necessarily remained stationary till tidings of the fugitives should reach him.

Confused accounts of persons answering to the description of those sought, though differing in name and other trifling particulars, seemed at length to ascertain that the count and his family were within a certain limit. Had the baron been profuse of his rewards, he would probably have traced the precise spot; but as those rewards chiefly consisted of promises, few of his emissaries imparted more than half of the little they knew; some, because they had cunning enough to foresee they might sell their discoveries to more advantage by degrees, and others, because their avarice was not awakened by the hope of any advantage at all. Of the former description were the junto at M——; but Stralenheim had learnt enough to be assured his victim could not be far off. Preparing, therefore, without remorse, to authenticate by every specious form of justice the severity of his proceedings, he resolved to secure his person on the first possible opportunity; and he persuaded himself this could be done with more perfect facility, as the order announced no hereditary distinction or title of the count; but, noting him simply by the name he had borne at Hamburg, left him not the little chance of profiting by an attention almost invariably shown to rank.

The season, however, was daily less favorable to the increasing impatience of Stralenheim. The frost had been succeeded by a rapid thaw: the Oder overflowed its banks, and the smaller rivers that discharged into it had carried away their bridges. There were still here and there, fords, over which the peasants, indeed, ventured to pass; but it was not seldom that even they found the undertaking both difficult and dangerous. To all remonstrances on that subject, however, the baron was insensible: the life of a soldier had habituated him to hazards of every kind; and he believed that he had only to add more horses to his carriage, and take other trifling precautions, to ascertain his safety. The postillions, in obedience to his command, plunged, though with reluctance, into the stream, and it was soon obvious that they had not exaggerated the danger. The horses, as well as those who guided them, nevertheless, struggled vigorously against it, and at length succeeded in reaching the opposite shore; but the force of the current had hurried them beyond the precise track: the bank to which they approached was steep and dangerous; it was, besides, undermined by the violence of the flood: in the effort of climbing it the ground gave way,—the horses lost their feet,—the weight of the carriage impelled it violently backwards,—it overset,—and all the hopes, views, and schemes of the baron were on the point of terminating for ever.

Two strangers, who had but lately gained the shore, were witnesses of the scene, and, perceiving the danger to be imminent, plunged, with some hazard to themselves, into the water. The last effort of the baron, on perceiving his situation, was to open the carriage door, and attempt to throw himself out. He had so far succeeded, that his rescue was accomplished with less difficulty than it otherwise would have been; and though he was to all appearance lifeless, the assistance given by the strangers was not vain. Many peasants also now hastened in aid of the latter; and, by their united efforts, not only Stralenheim, but his attendants and baggage were preserved from the stream. He was conveyed to a habitation not far distant, and every attention shown him the circumstances of the time and place admitted. Once more restored to the consciousness of what was passing around, he became sufficiently convinced of his own rashness to be grateful to those who had preserved him from its effects. They were travelers like himself, and, like himself, somewhat too daring; for their own situation, a few moments before, had been little less critical than his. One of them announced himself to be a Hungarian; the other a native, Saxon. The appearance and manners of each, especially those of the latter, bespoke him above the vulgar rank; and the baron surmised they might both probably be Austrians, who, from motives of justifiable prudence, forbore to avow themselves as such. The danger they had so gallantly encountered in favor of a stranger loudly demanded his gratitude; and as he found, on inquiry, that their journey was nearly in the same direction with his own, the most useful and obliging mode of testifying it was to provide for the general safety by making them his associates, at least till such time as the subsiding of the waters should secure either party from future difficulties. After a moment's hesitation the strangers accepted the proposal.

The baron, however, in escaping the stream, had not escaped all the consequences of his plunge there. Violent feverish symptoms announced the probability of future sufferings. The house to which he had been dragged afforded no accommodation or comfort to alleviate it. He recollected, precisely at this juncture, that he was within the estates, and not far from the palace, of the Prince de T——, under whom he had served; nor did he hesitate to profit by the occasion. His name, though not his person, was known to the intendant at M——; the rank he announced secured his reception, and thus, at length, without any previous plan or knowledge on his own part, was the baron set down within three hundred yards of the man he had traveled so many leagues in search of. Thus, too, were the misfortunes of the unhappy count brought to a climax, when the name of all others most hateful to him dropped from the lips of the innocent Marcellin; and when the report of Idenstein confirmed the alarming intelligence that "*the stranger* arrived in the prince's coach at the palace" was no other than *Baron Stralenheim.*

The singular coincidence of circumstances that brought the latter thither could neither be known nor guessed at by the count. Stralenheim, so lately at Hamburg, now close upon him in a devious road, was but too rational a confirmation of all his former suspicions. That the baron sought him he could no longer doubt: whether he knew he had found him he was yet to learn; but that his own departure, if it was to be accomplished at all, must be undertaken immediately, even under the miserable circumstances of performing it on foot could not but be certain. From the long and deep meditation into which he had been plunged after Idenstein quitted him, he was first roused by the timid embrace of Marcellin, whom his mother had sent to take leave of him for the night. Siegendorf, who felt the cruel probability of its being for ever, strained the boy to his bosom with a melting fondness he was not in the habit of testifying: while the child, who feared that he had in some way innocently transgressed, lavished caresses on his father that almost looked like presentiment. Josephine herself did not enter: she knew the temper of her husband ever disposed him to indulge the first bitterness of his feelings in solitude; and if she did not sympathize with, she at least had habituated herself to respect that proud sentiment which forbade him to unvail the secret recesses of his heart even to her. She was besides willing to free both, before they again met, from the interference or observation of the child. Siegendorf continued to listen to the voice of the latter, as it reached him from the further room, till the sounds died away; when, lifting his eyes from the fire, on the embers of which they had been long fixed, he saw the moon had already risen. She was to be the sad and solitary witness of his intended journey. He could neither resolve to take leave of Josephine, nor to depart without doing so; and rather from a mechanical desire of motion than any settled plan, he walked out of the house.

The night was cold—a bleak and boisterous north wind had arisen, and impelled volumes of dark clouds rapidly across the sky. He turned towards the high road, which was at the extremity of the garden wall, whence it sank into a woody hollow, at that hour peculiarly somber. It suited his frame of mind, and he pursued it for somewhat more than a quarter of a mile, when the wood shelving away on both sides, presented the open country, and presented at the same moment, to the great surprise of the count, a view of that inundation with which the late rains had covered it—the whole landscape seeming to form a sheet of water, over which the moon-beams played with a radiance that at once ascertained the fact.—To this friendly light he was evidently indebted for his safety, if not his life!—but his mind was not in a tone so to consider the dispensation. He turned sullenly back, and continuing his walk round the wild and lonely outskirts of the town, came at length within reach of the hum of men.—It was hateful to his ear. His eye involuntarily glanced towards the palace. Many of the apartments had lights in them, and throughout the whole building there was an air of unusual festivity and mirth. "I also lived in Arcadia,"* murmured the count, as he traversed the streets, impatient to hide himself from every human eye. Contrary to what was usual, they contained many idlers, who were passing home or elsewhere; and from their talk, as they crossed him, he learned that the intendant had, by the command of the baron, ordered dancing and a supper. Siegendorf was not more than five hundred yards from his own abode, when he was rudely jostled by a man who passed him; and turning round he perceived it was Idenstein. In the humor the count felt himself, life, though it were his own, or that of any other human being, was vile in his eyes; but he secretly despised Idenstein, and judged his own personal strength to be so much the superior of the two, that he hardly deigned to resent what he nevertheless suspected to be an insult. He only stopped, and sternly asked Idenstein "if he knew him?"—

"I can't tell any one that does, Mr. *Kruitzner*, except, indeed, it may be *one!*" returned Idenstein, with a marked and insolent sneer. The tone in which he spoke, together with his general appearance, convinced the count that what he had considered as an insult might as probably be the effect of inebriety: but who was the *one* who knew him? There was something in the words too accordant with the chasm of the hearer's thoughts to escape his attention. He nevertheless walked on in silence, though he perceived that Idenstein still kept by his side, and, in a voice of intoxication, continued to mutter something, like a man who is confusedly pursuing the thread of his own ideas.

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* Il y a un paysage de Poussin où l'on voit de jeunes bergères qui dansent au son du chalumeau: et, à l'écart, un tombeau, avec cette inscription, "Je vivais aussi dans la delicieuse Arcadie!"

Diderot, *sur la poësie Dramatique.*

A landscape of Poussin's represents a group of shepherdesses dancing to the music of the pipe. In the back ground is seen a tomb, with this inscription, "I also lived amid the delights of Arcadia!"

Diderot, *upon Dramatic Poetry.*

"The question may as well be settled here," said he, at length, laying his hand roughly on the arm of the count. The latter raised his eyes, and perceived they were precisely opposite one entrance of the palace.

"What question may be settled?" replied he, fiercely shaking Idenstein off.

"Whether you are really the man Baron Stralenheim is in search of, or not!"

The indignant count, now driven alike beyond all measure of patience or of prudence, and believing, from the motion of Idenstein, that he intended again to lay hands on him, seized the latter forcibly by the collar, and, throwing him with no little violence from him, saw him fall at his length on the pavement. What injury was likely to be the consequence he neither knew nor cared; but before he closed his own door, he perceived more than one person issue from that of the palace, and, by the moonlight, believed he distinguished the intendant to be amongst them.

The wildness and abruptness with which Siegendorf entered, alarmed Josephine even more than his absence had done. Hardly had he indistinctly, and in few words, given her to understand the cause of both, when they heard the street-door open, which the count had not had the precaution to secure, and the voices of Idenstein and the intendant, apparently loud and threatening, below. Frantic with passion, the count looked wildly around him for some weapon of defence: he believed himself on the point of suffering personal indignity, and every gleam of reason or of prudence vanished before the idea. The distracted Josephine conjured—implored him to retreat before the storm. In the last moment of desperation his eye glanced upon a large and sharp knife which lay on the table near, and with which she had been cutting bread for the child's supper. Siegendorf seized it with an earnest grasp, as if with it he had seized his fate: then pausing irresolutely for a moment, he at length turned from the door towards which he had advanced, and passed abruptly through another in the opposite direction:—not less determined than before, but like a man who feeling he has power in his hands, is become less desperate.

Idenstein and the intendant staggered in almost on the instant, both evidently in a state of intoxication; and Josephine, who a few moments before thought she could have encountered a host, turned pale and faint before the image of brutality. The violence of her emotion, however, presently subsided, when she discovered the intendant to be in fact only boisterously merry; and that the declared purport of the visit, as far as either party could make themselves understood, was to reconcile the difference between Idenstein and her husband. Vehemently did she now long to recall the latter—to dissipate the frenzy of his mind by convincing him that what had lately passed was a mere frolic of intoxication, and to restore to it that balmy hope which seemed to have fled the mansion. It was impossible, however, to venture upon a step thus dangerous and delicate; and she found herself fortunate beyond her expectations in being able to soothe the beings before her into temporary quietness, and finally to retreat.

Her gentle voice then prepared to tranquilize the bosom of her husband, and she trod in search of him with a light and rapid step along the apartments. They were dark and solitary! She then concluded he had quitted them through some of the various detached doors—all, however, were closed, and, as usual, slightly secured!—A wonder, vague—undefined—alarming, seized upon her, and she hastily passed forward through the house, but Siegendorf was no where to be seen in it. An open window, at length, attracted her notice, with some heavy furniture near, by which, though the casement was high, it might be reached. She could not with certainty recollect whether she had closed it, as was her custom towards evening, and with an anxious eye she surveyed its exterior distance from the ground: the descent was dangerous in the extreme, but it was not wholly impracticable; and the cruel apprehension that Siegendorf, impelled by the agitation of the moment, had accomplished his meditated purpose, and really departed for Bohemia, at once assailed her. Even this, however, became now the least of her terrors: the deep abstraction and gloom in which he had been plunged throughout the evening—the frenzy of rage that seemed to have succeeded it—the fever which she well knew beat in his pulse—and the actual hopelessness of his fate, armed, as he unhappily was, with the means of ending it, all united to inspire her with the most gloomy forebodings. Every hideous form of suicide presented itself to her imagination: she rushed breathless through the apartments, starting as she entered each, with the expectation of what it would present to her, yet impatient to explore the next. In the irritated state of her nerves and spirits, strange phantoms began to swim before her eyes, and unreal voices sounded in her ears; incapable, at length, of further struggle, she returned to the chamber of Marcellin, whom her agony and terrors had awakened; and laying her wan cheek against the rosy one of her child, lost all consciousness of suffering in temporary insensibility.

For what period of time this lasted Josephine was unable to ascertain: but she was not yet sensible to the pulsation of returning life, when the sound of her own name seemed to recall it; she opened her eyes—the boy, supposing her asleep, had again sunk into slumber in her arms, but the flashing and uncertain blaze of a candle, now burning in its socket, showed her husband standing by the bed-side. He might well have been mistaken for one of those forms of suicide her imagination had painted: his eyes had lost the fury which lately animated them—his cheek was wholly colorless, as though the blood had indeed "all descended to the laboring heart:"—in one hand he held the knife which had been the chief source of her terrors; the other was pressed forcibly within his bosom. Josephine attempted to offer him hers: he laid down the knife, folded his arm gently round her, and, drawing her towards him, related in a low and smothered voice the story of his absence.—It was, alas! little calculated to remove from her heart the horrible weight with which it was oppressed!

Siegendorf, in rushing so hastily from an encounter with those whose blood he secretly feared he should bring upon his head, had retreated to the last apartment of the range—it was a chamber: here he made a desperate stand, and, placing himself against the wainscot, prepared to plunge his knife deliberately, though not without warning, into the bosom of the first man who should attempt to lay hands on him; the vigor with which he pressed against that which supported him, suddenly caused it to give way; he looked round with surprise, and perceived it was not an accident, but the effect of some spring which he either touched or stood upon. It was no moment for deliberation!—he passed hastily through the aperture, and, without considering how he should return, closed the panel. He was immediately involved in total darkness: his extended arms, however, informed him, as his eye had indistinctly done, that he was in a gallery of no considerable width; floored, perfectly dry, and, as he believed, carpeted: the strangeness of the event filled his mind with painful curiosity, and he continued to advance more rapidly than in a cooler moment he probably would have ventured to do. Suddenly the ground, by some extraordinary impulse, seemed to shake beneath his feet; but before he had leisure to question the cause, it announced itself—for confused sounds of distant conviviality burst upon his ear, and snatches of music assured him he was in the neighborhood of dancers. The mystery was solved at once: it was clear that, having traversed the house which immediately adjoined to his own, he had reached the interior of the palace; and the various stories related of the intrigue between the countess and the prince passed in a moment across his recollection with the force of authenticity. While he continued to think, the sounds died away—he left them behind him, and found he touched the extremity of the passage. The spring, invisible on one side, was palpable at once on the other; encouraged by profound silence, he gently pressed it, and found himself precisely where the previous calculation of a moment would have told him he would find himself—in the state chamber of the palace, with which that in his own house communicated, and the bed-room of Baron Stralenheim!

Astonishment, approaching to stupor, chained up the faculties of Siegendorf; yet an instinctive impulse of self-preservation made him grasp with ferocious boldness the knife he still held. The apartment was extremely spacious, and magnificently hung: a bed of purple velvet, fringed with silver, stood under a canopied recess on one side; on the other was a cabinet of curious wood, ornamented with precious stones, and richly mounted: lighted tapers were placed near, and letters, as well as other papers, confusedly scattered over it; but the object which at once arrested the attention of the count was several rouleaus of gold that lay ranged beside them.—Lastly, near the fire, abhorred by his eyes, and now fearful indeed to his imagination, was Stralenheim himself, stretched in an easy chair, and buried in a deep sleep.

The demons of desperation and cupidity seized at once upon their victim in every form of temptation ingenuity could devise. Driven thus to the verge of a precipice, without one hand to save, one hope to soothe him, poverty—insult—a dungeon! a despoiled inheritance—a helpless child, and a despairing wife, passed at once in gloomy perspective before his imagination. How should he, who had never known what it was to contend with one imperious wish, now stem the torrent of all? He believed it almost a duty to free himself, for the sake even of others, from that abject penury which seemed to include every evil.—His hand was on the gold, when Stralenheim moved. Rendered desperate alike by shame and apprehension, Siegendorf fiercely raised the knife—happily, the motion of the baron brought with it no consciousness—he merely turned his face from the light which incommoded him. The count, after gazing on him for a moment, hastily thrust into his bosom that portion of the gold which was nearest:—retreated—closed the door—and, in the dreadful perturbation and disgrace of the occasion, breathed out an imperfect ejaculation to that God who had providentially saved him from being a murderer!

This was no tale of comfort to the ear or the heart of Josephine! It brought too close to the latter that afflicting doubt she had so often banished from it—on what point of her husband's character she could finally depend! She saw him driven from error to error—from temptation to temptation—still yielding—still repenting—and where would be the last? Sacrificing every thing by turns, either to false calculations, or ungoverned passions: his father—his wife—even his honor! at least, that pure and secret sense which seemed to her its essence. Murder had already become amongst the almost inevitable temptations of his fate!—She ventured not to pause upon the ideas which thus irresistibly forced themselves upon her mind. Other considerations, far subordinate indeed, but sufficiently important in their nature, were open to the observation of both.—Of what use was the gold thus dangerously and unjustly acquired?—It could not extricate them from their entanglements at M——; it could not even be offered to Idenstein!—it could buy them nothing!—it could obtain them nothing!—It was as dross in their hands—or even worse—since, but to be suspected of possessing it, would bring forth at once accusation and proof! would throw them inevitably and disgracefully into the power of Stralenheim, and give to his most vindictive measures the sanction of law—alas! almost that of justice!—These, and similar considerations, had, in the tumult of his thoughts, wholly escaped the attention of the count. Goaded, as he had been, to desperation, by the apprehended insults of Idenstein, in possessing himself of gold, he had, for the moment, believed he possessed himself of every thing:—but it was not so! —so far otherwise, that he felt he could not purchase his liberation, even though he were to make the last humiliating sacrifice of every manly principle. Dissimulation, falsehood itself, would be of no avail towards accomplishing that purpose. Though his real condition in life was an enigma, it was well known that he could have no resources at M——, and the only shadow of deceit he could have employed, was precluded effectually by the Argus-like watch of Weilburg, who would be assured he had received no remittances by letter. The count then, far from having palliated even the obvious and coarser evils of his fate, had, in fact, only added to them; since the flight his poverty did but threaten to impede, his newly-acquired wealth forbade him to attempt. For what,—should suspicion be awakened,—might in his absence be the probable fate of his wife and child?

In reflections like these, the little that remained of night soon fled away, and morning brought with it appropriate fears and sorrows: for now Idenstein might again obtrude upon them! That he was an instrument in the hands of the baron his own wanton insolence had effectually testified; and that he could be formidable without that circumstance they too well knew. The senses and the heart of Siegendorf seemed at length, however, dull to apprehension of every kind. He resigned himself with a sort of sullen despondency to his fate; and if his pulse underwent any change on hearing the voice of the intendant, his countenance did not announce it.

The intendant himself was languid and heavy with the excesses of the preceding evening: it was evident, nevertheless, that he came to observe and to scrutinize, though he strove to vail the intention. A few moments' conversation was sufficient to convince both the count and Josephine that their visitor knew nothing of what had passed in the chamber of Stralenheim, who, finding himself unusually ill the night before, had taken a large quantity of laudanum, and was not yet stirring. The observations of the intendant, therefore, went only to the same point with those of Idenstein: both were now fully persuaded that Kruitzner and his wife were the parties sought by Stralenheim, and each equally desirous to know the value of the secret, before he finally parted with it to his employer: nor was the intendant without a curiosity to discover—what he perceived the policy of the baron had hitherto studiously withheld—the names and condition of his intended victims. His visit, therefore, was long, wearisome, and, as is often the case with such visits as mean every thing, seemed to mean nothing. It obtained him no information; and he at length retired, as little satisfied with it as those had been to whom it was made. Neither the count nor Josephine, however, heard without a silent sense of self-congratulation, that Idenstein suffered so severely from the effects of intemperance, as to leave no probability of his quitting his chamber till late.

The departure of the intendant seemed to promise a momentary respite of persecution:—but the hope was illusive.—A voice to which they were not familiar, heard in parley with Marcellin, attracted the attention of the count and his wife soon after their guest had quitted them: the child ran hastily into the room, and announced a stranger, who inquired for the intendant. Siegendorf advanced with no less rapidity: his soul seemed to forebode that it was Stralenheim, and to dare the encounter. The stranger on his part either supposing the child did not understand him, or that the rank of the persons on whom he intruded dispensed with ceremony, entered almost at the same moment. He was a much younger man, however, than Stralenheim, and of a more noble appearance. His eye fell first on Josephine:—he paused—looked earnestly at her, and from her to the count; repeating, not without hesitation, the question he had before asked:—faintly was it replied to; for almost before the sounds could escape on either side, the eyes and palpitating hearts of each present had asked and answered a question far more important! Josephine and her husband believed it possible they might mistake—but the stranger did not doubt! he knew, and in a moment recognized his parents!—It was Conrad!

With a burst of agonizing joy the mother threw herself into his arms, nor did Siegendorf feel less acutely the sudden and inexplicable throb of nature, increased, too, as it was, by every circumstance of time or place that could add to it.—To have found him! found that son so long and so anxiously wished for! and at a period so critical, seemed little less than the immediate interposition of Heaven! Nor did the particulars that attended it appear less a subject of perplexity and wonder than the event itself: that Conrad should have been the deliverer of Stralenheim—the companion of his journey—an inmate of the same house, was a coincidence of circumstances so extraordinary as almost to be incredible! Of the wonder, however, Conrad himself was wholly ignorant, till it was now hastily and vaguely communicated to him. The mere circumstance of meeting the baron, had to him nothing remarkable in it! the service he had rendered the latter had arisen from the impulse of the moment; for he neither knew, nor believed, even when he was told, that he had rescued an enemy or a competitor. Nurtured as Conrad had been in fondness and indulgence, no menace of a rival heir had ever offended his ear; no name, but that of his father, had ever been announced as standing between him and his inheritance.—All that was necessary to be known appeared to him therefore sufficiently ascertained when he beheld his parents; nor did the tumult of their mutual joy seem a season for other explanation. How sweet were the emotions with which they listened to that hasty one the moment allowed Conrad to offer on his part! With what delight did they hear that the son, against whom their hearts had so often murmured, had been wanting in no duty or affection: that he had voluntarily and even rashly quitted the splendid lot assigned him, to seek those whom childhood had endeared to his memory, and either share with them, or renounce his own pretensions in life.

Ages would have seemed too little for the story each was now obliged to comprise in moments. How the future was to be regulated, and whether, thus fortified with double claims, it would be advisable that they should openly and immediately defy the power of Stralenheim, or, silently withdrawing, establish their own rights on the spot where his rank and influence would be comparatively insignificant, were questions too mighty and important to be easily explained to Conrad, or, when explained, to be determined upon. Till they were, profound silence was alike the interest of all. And ah! how easy was the restriction! with hearts once more kindling to hope, and recollections absorbed in the transport of the occasion, the count and Josephine felt no want, no wish but to gaze and to listen. All they had lost—all they had desired—all, for the pursuit of which they had steeped themselves in poverty and sorrow, vanished before the feeling which had now taken possession of their bosoms: while Conrad, pressing to his the little Marcellin, concealed his face in the bosom of the smiling boy, as if he found in this new and unsuspected tie a tender medium, through which to announce his own sensibility.

Josephine, however, anxious that no premature discovery on the part of Stralenheim should blight the prospect of the future, was earnest to send her son from her. Conrad only mused at her remonstrances, and smiled half disdainfully at her fears.

"Stralenheim," said he, "does not appear to me altogether the man you take him for:—but were it even otherwise, he owes me gratitude not only for the past, but for what he supposes to be my present employment. I saved his life, and he therefore places confidence in me. He has been robbed last night—is sick—a stranger—and in no condition to discover the villain who has plundered him: I have pledged myself to do it—and the business on which I sought the intendant was chiefly that."

The count felt as though he had received a stroke upon the brain. Death in any form, unaccompanied with dishonor, would have been preferable to the pang that shot through both that and his heart. Indignantly had he groaned under the remorse of the past, the humiliation thus incurred by it he would hardly have tolerated from any human being; yet was it brought home to him, through a medium so bitterly afflicting, as defied all calculation. At the word *villain*, his lips quivered, and his eyes flashed fire. It was the vice of his character, ever to convert the subjects of self-reproach into those of indignation.

"And who," said he, starting furiously from his seat, "has entitled you to brand thus with ignominious epithets a being you do not know? Who," he added with increasing agitation, "has taught you that it would be safe even for my son to insult me?"

"It is not necessary to know the person of a ruffian," replied Conrad, indignantly, "to give him the appellation he merits:—and what is there in common between my father and such a character?"

"*Every thing*," said Siegendorf, bitterly—"for that ruffian was your father!"

Conrad started back with incredulity and amazement: then measured the count with a long and earnest gaze, as though, unable to disbelieve the fact, he felt inclined to doubt whether it were really his father who avowed it.

"Conrad," exclaimed the latter, interpreting his looks, and in a tone that ill disguised the increasing anguish of his own soul, "before you thus presume to chastise me with your eye, learn to understand my actions!—Young and inexperienced in the world—reposing hitherto in the bosom of indulgence and luxury, is it for *you* to judge of the force of the passions, or the temptations of misery?—Wait till like me you have blighted your fairest hopes—have endured humiliation and sorrow—poverty and famine—before you pretend to judge of their effect on you! Should that miserable day ever arrive—should *you* see the being at your mercy who stands between you, and every thing that is dear or noble in life!—Who is ready to tear from you your name—your inheritance—your very life itself—congratulate your own heart, if, like me, you are content with petty plunder, and are not tempted to exterminate a serpent, who now lives, perhaps, to sting us all!—You do not know this man," continued he, with the same incoherent eagerness, and impetuously silencing Conrad, who would have spoken—"I do—I believe him to be mean—sordid—deceitful!—You will conceive yourself safe because you are young and brave!—Learn, however, from the two instances before you, none are so secure but desperation or subtilty may reach them!—Stralenheim in the palace of a prince was in my power!—My knife was held over him!—a single moment would have swept him from the face of the earth, and with him all my future fears:—I forbore—and I am now in his.—Are you certain that you are not so too? Who assures you he does not know you?—Who tells you that he has not lured you into his society, either to rid himself of you for ever, or to plunge you with your family into a dungeon?—*Me*, it is plain, he has known invariably through every change of fortune or of name—and why not you?—*Me* he has entrapped—are you more discreet? He has wound the snares of Idenstein around me:—of a reptile, whom, a few years ago, I would have spurned from my presence, and whom, in spurning now, I have furnished with fresh venom:—Will *you* be more patient?—Conrad, Conrad, there are crimes rendered venial by the occasion, and temptations too exquisite for human fortitude to master or endure." The count passionately struck his hand on his forehead as he spoke, and rushed out of the room.

Conrad, whose lips and countenance had more than once announced an impatient desire to interrupt his father during the early part of his discourse, stunned by the wildness and vehemence with which it was pursued, had sunk towards the close of it into profound silence. The anxious eyes of Josephine, from the moment they lost sight of her husband, had been turned towards her son; and, for the first time in her life, she felt her heart a prey to divided affections; for, while the frantic wildness of Siegendorf almost irresistibly impelled her to follow him, she was yet alive to all the danger of leaving Conrad a prey to reflections hostile to every sentiment of filial duty or respect. The latter, after a long silence, raised his inquiring looks to hers; and, whatever the impression under which his mind labored, he understood too well the deep and painful sorrow imprinted on her countenance not instantly to conceal it.

"These are only the systems of my father," said he, continuing earnestly to gaze on her. "My mother thinks not with him?"

Josephine spoke not: there was an oppression at her heart that robbed her of the power. Conrad covered his face with his hand, and reclined it for a moment on her shoulder.

"Explain to me," said he, after a second pause, "what are the claims of Stralenheim, and why he is thus formidable to us." Josephine was ill able to undertake the task: she felt it a duty, however, to expel, if possible, from the bosom of her son feelings alike disgraceful and injurious to his father; and to exonerate the latter, as far as circumstances would permit, from that censure to which his intemperate passion had subjected him. It was not easy, however, so to relate the past events of Siegendorf's life as deeply to interest a noble or an upright mind. The candid and tender Josephine, therefore, almost betrayed the cause she strove to serve by an effect of that ingenuousness which was natural to her, and which she too evidently struggled to suppress. She detailed, with as much simplicity and exactness as the time and particulars would allow, the circumstance by which Siegendorf conceived himself within the power of Stralenheim; the events that occurred at Hamburg, the intelligence of Giulio in which Conrad had so deep a share, and every agitating and distressing occurrence that had since preyed upon the temper or feelings of his father. Lastly, she painted that critical point at which he now stood with respect to the baron, and all the possible evils that might result from the persecution of the latter.

The countenance of Conrad gathered into increasing attention as she continued to speak; and he became, as might well be expected, profoundly meditative, when he perceived the new light her narrative threw over the fate of his family. *That* showed him at once the mighty stake, for obtaining which Stralenheim had so deeply schemed, and all the hazard of the present conjuncture: what he had believed to be little less than madness in the discourse of the count was, however exaggerated by irritation of mind, yet evidently grounded on the most alarming facts: and unwilling as he himself was to pain his mother by the avowal of any corroborating circumstances, he was yet secretly sensible that, in the progress of his own intimacy with the baron, he had reason to surmise that the latter was in pursuit of some enemy whom he had both authority and inclination to crush. In this secret Conrad had hitherto felt little interest; he now perceived he had the deepest. While revolving it he was bewildered with the recollection of that new entanglement which his father had so lately made for himself; and saw too evidently, that, were it possible to defeat the great aim of Stralenheim by a united and open defiance, which yet they had abundant reason to doubt, there would still remain the probability of a discovery that could not fail to overwhelm them with shame and disgrace. Among the prince's household there might be many who knew the communication between Kruitzner's residence and the palace: possibly the intendant himself: To guard the secret of the baron's losses was, therefore, the only method of defeating suspicion: nor was this altogether so hopeless an undertaking as it appeared; for Stralenheim, when entrusting to Conrad the particulars of the robbery, had himself doubted whether prudence did not rather require him to bury it in silence, than insult the domestics of his highness by a charge he might find it impossible to substantiate. This opinion Conrad had combated; and the conduct of the business had, in consequence, been finally submitted to his discretion: a word from him would, therefore, perhaps still determine the baron to silence; and aware, as the former now was, of the innocence of those before suspected, he might utter that word without dishonor or insincerity.

The disposition of Conrad differed widely from that of his father: it had less passion and more decision. The difficulties with which he was encumbered faded, therefore, as he continued to meditate on the means of removing them. While listening to the count's discourse, it had appeared to him all confusion, mystery, and chimera: he was at length master of the subject: he saw it in its clearest and strongest light, free from the passionate irritation of Siegendorf, or the softer perturbation of Josephine; though not without those attendant feelings that peculiarly marked his own character. His countenance, therefore, cleared, and he had the air of a man who, relieved from a wild and tormenting uncertainty, begins remotely to determine the point on which he must rest. He perceived that it was indispensable to the safety of his parents that they should, without delay, be extricated from the humiliating and perilous situation in which they then stood; and to the future claims of all, that they should be personally as well as jointly asserted in the country whence they were derived. It was not possible for the most decided mind immediately to ascertain the manner in which these measures could be effected; but Conrad pledged himself to accomplish them in some way; and his mother, who had considered his long meditation as an inauspicious omen, felt, while he continued to speak, a sweet assurance that he would succeed. It was agreed that he should return an hour after the close of evening, to communicate the result of his own deliberations, as well as what passed in the interim at the palace; where, should any steps be taken that appeared alarming, he would be at hand to frustrate or oppose them.

At the moment of Conrad's departure, he was surprised by the entrance of the Hungarian, who, directed by a chance inquiry, had come thither in search of him. The latter had been assistant with himself in rescuing Stralenheim from the danger of the water, and had consequently partaken of his hospitality at M——: but as his manners did not bear decidedly the stamp of high birth like those of Conrad, he was far from being taken as familiarly to the confidence or society of the baron. Josephine had at that moment no eye or ear for nice discrimination: conceiving her visitor to be the associate of her son, she did not, however, omit the civilities of life; but Conrad, who perceived it would be difficult to conceal the tender relation in which he stood with his mother, was now impatient to depart; and hardly had he quitted the house when, shaking off his companion, whom the pre-occupied state of his mind rendered an incumbrance, he withdrew to revolve in solitude, and with deep consideration, those plans and feelings to which the singular events of the morning had given birth.

Josephine, previous to the departure of her son, had received from his hands a ring of very considerable price. Money he plainly learnt from her detail could not safely be offered to Idenstein: yet some valuable that should secure the possessor from his insults might, nevertheless, should the pressure of circumstances demand it, be produced, perhaps, without danger; and he submitted it to her discretion, and that of his father, either to retain or dispose of the jewel in question in any way they should deem most expedient. The count was now in a frame of mind to listen to the event of his son's visit. The fever of his spirits had subsided: the softer and more delightful emotions by which he had been agitated at the first sight of Conrad had resumed their place in his bosom; and though he had not been able to resolve on voluntarily re-entering the room he had quitted, he yet listened to the parting steps of his son with anxious fondness and unavailing regret. Under this impression there was something peculiarly touching in the token of tender interest and concern the ring offered: there was even more in it than the circumstance itself seemed to present.

Jewels, in the more remote periods of society, were considered as a sort of heir-loom, and rarely changed their fashion or their owners: that now before him the count remembered to have frequently seen in common with many others, deemed the necessary and ceremonious appendages of a splendor he had believed inseparable from his fate. He was at that period in the very dawn and first bloom of manhood! How strange had since been the alteration both in himself and in all around! The same jewel was now drawn from the hand of his son, and for the sole purpose of rescuing him from the bitterest poverty!—His youth was almost past!—his self-importance annihilated!—the current of time had carried away half of those golden hopes with which life had been freighted, and his own indiscretion had made a wreck of the remainder!

Considerations like these were calculated to reduce the high tone of his imperious spirit, and bring him painfully down to the level of humanity and reason. They were, indeed, but too necessary to prepare him for what was to follow; for while he yet continued to muse over the ring he was surprised with the appearance of Idenstein.—The contemplations of the count had insensibly devolved from the past to the future: and a plan which, though hazardous, did not appear unpromising, had presented itself to his imagination. Some person it was evident he must, to a certain degree, confide in, before it was possible he should free himself from the fetters that bound him to M——. His circle was too narrow to leave much scope for deliberation. Weilburg was merely a passive spy, with whom he had little communication: his mind revolted from the intendant with that invincible disdain which low cunning and purse-proud habits ever engender: neither did he believe it possible, closely as the latter was connected with Stralenheim, to purchase either his silence or his acquiescence. In Idenstein, though there was much occasional insolence, there was something less habitually offensive; and had he not been needy he would probably have been only insignificant. The same temptation, therefore, and the same credulity that made him an instrument in the hands of one man, might, if duly acted upon, operate in favor of another: and though in the scale of society a being thus venal and trifling ranked, according to the estimation of the count, among the lowest of the low, yet, by a sentiment not uncommon to proud minds, he felt it, therefore, the less difficult to descend, and treat with him on his own ground.

It would hardly be possible to conceive a state of more whimsical embarrassment than that which took place in the mind of Idenstein at the courteousness of his reception. He entered with a temper extremely sullen, and, as he believed, determined: his recollection of the rencounter that had taken place the evening before, though very imperfect, was, indeed, such as made him resolve to avoid all personal extremities with the count; but, as he knew enough to be assured that Baron Stralenheim's measures with regard to the former were drawing to a crisis, he was willing to take his last chance for all possible share in the event of them; and to extort from some sudden gust of passion, which Josephine's presence would prevent from becoming dangerous, what it seemed no longer probable he should obtain by craft. But he was now to be encountered with his own weapons: for Siegendorf, who, despite of the perplexities of his situation, yet felt a confidence inspired by the late favorable circumstances and the certain support of his son, had resumed the command of his temper, and was no longer the imperious, unbending, and unobservant character he had hitherto appeared. Idenstein thus defeated, he hardly knew why or how in his meditated attack, sank insensibly into a sort of silent and wondering listener while the count continued to talk; till the latter advancing slowly and obscurely towards his aim, made him at last remotely comprehend that it might be more for his advantage to betray, than to forward, the cause in which he had enlisted.

Throughout the whole circle of Idenstein's ideas this had never yet made one. The poverty of Kruitzner had stared him so obviously in the face, that neither the delicate habits of Josephine, nor the air of distinction which even in his most humiliating moments eminently marked the count, had been able to remove the eyes of his associate from that formidable specter; but when, in its place, phantoms of grandeur and affluence were presented to him, the whole prospect of the future underwent a sudden change. He recollected, what was strictly true, that he had, in fact, little reason to be satisfied with the intendant; who, whatever was the value of the service they were mutually to render Stralenheim, had suffered his coadjutor to discover too evidently that *he* would have little share in the reward. With Stralenheim himself he had even less cause to be pleased. He had seen him only once; but their meeting had served, nevertheless, to display those traits of cold and forbidding arrogance which at all times marked the character of the baron; and which as he was taught by the selfish cunning of the intendant to suppose Idenstein of no consequence to his plans, he did not attempt to dissemble. Small as the consequence of the latter might seem in the eyes of others, in his own, however, it was pretty considerable; and his zeal was already cooled in a cause that neither promised him recompense nor thanks. While he continued, therefore, to pause with apparent complacency upon the arguments presented to him, the count watched the critical moment; and, sensible that he had himself advanced too far now to recede, he produced the jewel. Idenstein started with astonishment! Chance, and some commercial connections, made him a judge of its value. He looked earnestly at it, and considered long. The count had also considered well before he offered it: although to him it would have been known from amidst ten thousand others, it bore, as he believed, no family distinction, no appropriate mark, that could ever ascertain its original owner to an indifferent person: nor had he, in fact, an intention to part with it, except on such terms as should render all that might follow immaterial to him.

The hitherto wavering fidelity of Idenstein seemed at length on the point of being finally shaken: the count pursued the advantage. With an equivocal and half confidence, he now observed, "that he had himself important reasons for continuing his journey, wholly remote from any pursuit or project that Stralenheim might be engaged in—a pursuit of which it was by no means proved that he was the object, although the mere circumstance of being mistaken for such might very considerably embarrass him." Siegendorf, though almost assured of success, was not, however, so unguarded as to betray either his name or condition: on the contrary, he still cautiously vailed both. But his air—his tone—an internal consciousness that he was nearly, though not wholly, speaking the truth, had that almost irresistible effect on his hearer, truth rarely fails to produce. Idenstein was not indeed deceived into doubting whether or no Kruitzner would prove the person sought by the baron; his conviction on that subject was even stronger than before, but his interest in believing it was less, in proportion as a more immediate and certain advantage than any yet held out to him now presented itself: he felt a secret persuasion that whatever were the temporary circumstances of the man before him, his pretensions in life were of no common kind; and gay, though undefined, visions of future fortune and patronage sparkled to his eyes. Siegendorf, who saw his purpose nearly accomplished, concluded his discourse by solemnly affirming the jewel to be a memorial of his family, nothing but the last exigency could induce him to part with; and, valuable as it was in itself, he pledged his honor to redeem it at a future period with treble its price. That period, could either have looked into the future, they would have seen was never to arrive; but the argument was conclusive with his hearer: Idenstein acceded at once; and nothing remained but to discover in what manner his services could be rendered most useful.

In the discussion of the future, however, much embarrassment still arose; as the secrecy necessary to the occasion was such as rendered it extremely difficult for the count to quit M——, even with the connivance of Idenstein. How far the advice of Conrad might have been useful, or in what manner his parents could have benefited by his interference, was also a subject of deep perplexity and care to the count. It was necessary, however, so to arrange the plan with Idenstein, that the services of Conrad might not be essential in its execution, and to reserve the liberty of changing it, should a better occur; for Siegendorf had still too little faith in his new auxiliary to put his son in his power by an indiscreet discovery. He was moreover sensible that he could himself be but half in the power of Stralenheim, while Conrad remained unknown; and it was, therefore, of the first consequence to conceal the relationship between them. After much investigation, and many impracticable proposals, the count and Idenstein at length simplified the plan of escape to so humble a one as seemed likely to defeat suspicion or danger. The latter engaged secretly to place a vehicle, of sufficient size to hold Kruitzner and his family, in a ruinous out-house that stood not far from the palace, and had once served as temporary stables. To this he was, at a proper season, to add an able horse, with such little accommodations as would prevent the danger of sudden delay on their journey: he engaged, in the interim, to amuse the intendant with fictitious accounts of the intentions of Kruitzner; to lull both him and Stralenheim into profound security; and, when the moment of discovery at length arrived, to baffle either inquiry or pursuit by every artifice he could safely adopt. Such was the arrangement: yet, when made, it was difficult for the parties concerned, however fair the promises made on both sides, to separate without a mutual distrust. The count could not in common prudence recompense his ally till his share of the agreement was performed; and Idenstein was not without a secret surmise, that when it was performed the recompense might be either evaded or withheld. In this, however, they were equally unjust; for the one had too much to hazard by treachery, the other too little to gain. Although the favor of the intendant might serve Idenstein, his resentment could in fact do him little injury; for he had nothing to lose but a character; and there were occasions on which he had himself been diffident enough to doubt if he had that. He knew to a certainty that he offended no law, since he had never been legally employed. Had it even been otherwise, all the little jurisprudence of M—— was within his own hands; and, what was still better towards his security, the intendant himself had strained the power so often, that his discretion would hardly admit of his entering the lists against an opponent likely to prove dangerous. All conclusions drawn, and all objections weighed, Idenstein was, therefore, sincere; and the communications he voluntarily made to the count were of a nature at once to prove his sincerity, and to point out to the latter that precipice on which he had justly suspected himself of standing.

The inundation which had continued to rise, and which Siegendorf had at one time considered as the cruel finish to his ill fortune, he now learned, from the report of Idenstein, had been, in fact, the pledge of his safety. The latter could not, indeed, exactly ascertain all the particulars that had been canvassed between Stralenheim and the intendant; but he well knew that a messenger had that very day been dispatched towards Frankfort, who had returned only from the impossibility of proceeding safely; and that the baron waited, with the most anxious impatience, for his departure on the succeeding morning. The messenger had, in confidence, communicated to Idenstein, whom he knew to be trusted by his master, that his errand at Frankfort was to the commandant, and that he understood he was to return in company with a military guard!—All now then approached to a climax! and four-and-twenty hours would probably decide the fate of Siegendorf! four-and-twenty hours would defeat the schemes of his enemy; place him for ever, perhaps, beyond the reach of the latter, and finally restore all that was great and desirable in life; or tear him from every thing dear there, and leave his son and wife to struggle as they could, in order to preserve for him that single, solitary blessing! His mind was roused to the encounter.—A generous and justifiable indignation awakened his feelings, and strengthened his nerves. Tumult, irritation, and all the grosser particles of his character, subsided for the time, and left a calm and steady surface, worthy of the son of Count Siegendorf and the husband of Josephine! To encounter his fate with vigor, and to bear it, whatever it might prove, with unshaken resolution, was the determined purpose of his soul! It is the wrong we commit against ourselves that corrodes and most bitterly envenoms the heart; that we receive from others sometimes displays its noblest faculties, either by the act of repelling or enduring the evil! Siegendorf owed half his faults, and almost all his miseries, to a secret tearing consciousness of error, which he never permitted to rise into reformation. In this case it was not so!—The inheritance was not the right of Stralenheim: the means he pursued to obtain it were not those of rectitude or candor:—the count stood pledged to his family in an honorable cause, and he rose, therefore, with the dignity of an honorable feeling to meet it.

The future now literally floated on the uncertain breath of a wind: for on the wind depended the continuance of the flood. It was during the course of the ensuing day that Idenstein had engaged to fulfill his promise: it could not be useful to do it sooner, and might be dangerous. Tedious hours were to intervene; and that fortitude the count had so lately assumed was indeed necessary towards supporting them: yet even those hours were to present a solace long denied to his heart and his eyes: for he was once more to see Conrad—his eldest born! the first pledge of love!—the blooming young man whose features he had hardly yet had leisure to trace, and whose noble and susceptible heart he feared he had deeply outraged by the extravagant as well as indiscreet excesses of his own!

Under this impression it was hardly possible to present a countenance and demeanor more different from the morning than that with which the count welcomed his son. He had even self-command enough to control his feelings, when he found his surmises confirmed, as he feared, by the reserve of Conrad; and, by a powerful effort, he obliged himself to respect in the latter the feelings of a virtuous indignation. Conrad, like his father, was indeed naturally haughty, and but little accustomed to the high tone of rebuke: nor had he yet recovered from the surprise of the morning, and the contemplation on the characters of both his parents to which it had given birth. That of his mother was plain, noble, tender—a short observation had taught him to comprehend and to respect it. It was far otherwise in what regarded his father: the first extravagant sally of the count, and the singular avowal it contained, had presented to the imagination of his son the image of some bold and daring transgressor, who stands aloof from society, and despises its obligations: —it was the leader of a banditti that seemed to start up before him under the name of a father; and every faculty of his soul had been roused to attention. Happily, as it proved for him, the fury of the count had not allowed him to speak at a crisis when these sentiments would have betrayed themselves; and in continuing to listen, they had gradually faded before the impression of wounded pride and embittered sensibility expressed in the accents of Siegendorf. But no distinct image was substituted for that which was effaced; and though the words of the count had sunk deep into the memory and heart of his hearer, they still left a strange uncertainty in both as to the real character of that man, who, while he spoke with almost savage ferocity of destroying an enemy, could yet be worked up to agony by the eye of a son.

It was not, however, under the influence of a doubt, that Conrad could take his father to his bosom or his confidence; and though he would willingly have suppressed what his features announced, it was easy to see that he he came to scrutinize and to understand him. The count was painfully sensible of this, and his mind strove proportionably to assert itself. It was long since Josephine had seen the sunshine of her husband's eyes, and the snatches with which it now illumined his countenance called forth all the brightness of hers. In the garb of poverty, under the roof of dependence, shrouded as it were in sorrow and suffering, the native dignity and charms of both prevailed. They had now also leisure to contemplate the manly beauty of their son; and their eyes mutually interchanged glances of applause and congratulation. The exterior of Conrad, though seen only by the imperfect light the fire diffused through their spacious apartment, was yet grand, commanding, impressive beyond even what that of his father had ever been. His person, though tall, was vigorous and full;—it seemed cast in the mold of a hero, and had nothing to do with the common and every-day race of men. The contour of his head and throat was singularly powerful and striking:—it presented that bold outline sometimes formed in a moment of inspiration by the chisel of a master, and which the connoisseur or physiognomist alike seizes upon as exclusively his own:—the strength of the features was, however, subdued by the soft glow and flexible muscles of youth; his mind and manners seemed in unison with this character of person, and had a tone of daringness and resolution that bespoke him formed for extraordinary enterprises. The count gazed on him in silence; and a thousand bright visions of honorable distinction and happiness, for ever annihilated in his own person, insensibly revived in that of Conrad. The gloomy present faded before the perspective of the future; and, by the strange but natural magic of the affections, Siegendorf tasted a few moments of a felicity so exquisite, that nothing was wanting but the conviction that his son esteemed to render it perfect.

The brow of Conrad, though he strove to clear it, was, nevertheless, evidently clouded by disquietude. Those various feelings created by the circumstances in which he had so suddenly found himself placed, had been considerably augmented by the events which had passed at the palace, during his absence from it. They were, he believed, of a nature once more to kindle the turbulent passions of his father: yet the communication of them neither admitted of hesitation nor delay:—the moments were precious to all, and the necessity of resolving most urgent.

That half resolution which prudence had induced Baron Stralenheim to form with respect to the robbery he had sustained, the habits of his character had not allowed him to fulfill: the time Conrad passed with his mother had, unfortunately, afforded leisure to the intendant and the baron for more open and familiar intercourse than they had hitherto entered into; and, during this interval of mutual explanation, Stralenheim became satisfied that the man who called himself Kruitzner was, in reality, no other than Count Siegendorf. He felt no disposition, however, to communicate to his companion the importance of this discovery, or the advantage he meant to make of it. It would neither have been consistent with the discretion or the *hauteur* of his character, to elevate one of the prince's domestics into the immediate confidant of his own projects or expectations in life: taking such measures as he believed would secure him the military assistance he desired from Frankfort, he left the intendant, therefore, as much in the dark with respect to the grand secret as he had hitherto remained: but the subordinate one of the robbery, as being more within the province of the latter, he resolved to communicate. Stralenheim was far from rich, and he loved money: the recital of his losses was not made, therefore, without some acrimony; and the jealous pride of the intendant immediately took fire, as indeed the complainant had suspected it would do, at the bare idea of attaching disgrace to any of the household of the prince. Something resembling altercation took place between them: each, however, believed it his interest not to quarrel with the other; and the disgust which seemed upon the point of arising on both sides was, therefore, according to their own ideas, happily subdued by their mutually fixing on an intermediate person as the object of distrust. The appearance and manners of Conrad threw it, indeed, wholly at a distance: but nature had not been so liberal to the Hungarian, and they, therefore, kindly determined that fortune should be equally unjust: he had, besides, that dangerous and suspicious symptom—poverty: and though the baron and the intendant might probably differ in their estimate of wealth, they were nearly at issue on one point—that a poor man could seldom be deemed an honest one. On the Hungarian, therefore, they rested the whole weight of their suspicions; and, though the nature of the loss did not admit of its being brought to proof, they treated him with an indignity that showed they did not wait for it. It was at the critical moment of his humiliation that Conrad, after a solitary walk, re-entered the palace. What his feelings were, on the scene he there witnessed, it was not possible for him to recapitulate to his father. His own suspicions had, indeed, in the first instance, like theirs, fallen on the Hungarian; he had since learned their fallacy! So singularly, however, was he circumstanced, that it was not in his power to assert the innocence of the accused, though he knew it:—it was not in his power to quit the palace with him, and partake his fate, though he felt it to be unmerited: it was, unhappily, not even in his power to attest the general honor of his companion: for he had become such by accident—was little known to him—had shared his purse, because he appeared to want it; and had no other claim but that of seeming above his fortunes.

What those fortunes were, however, either the prudence or the resentment of the Hungarian induced him obstinately to conceal. He had retorted the indignities shown him with the determination of innocence, and the pride of a mind resolved to rest upon itself. Finally he had, without hesitation, quitted the palace, though he knew not where else he could find shelter:—for the caution of Siegendorf's ancient host had not forsaken him, and he had neither room for poverty, nor for the rejected guest of the intendant. Under these circumstances Conrad had left the Hungarian a wanderer in the environs of the town; hemmed in by the waters from leaving it, yet resolved to encounter either peril or suffering rather than submit to further degradation.—Such was the detail at length reluctantly given by Conrad, and such the feelings of which the avowal was extorted from him! What were those of the count on hearing the recital! It seemed of late the peculiar misery of his fate to have the cup of comfort ever dashed from his lips at the moment he began to taste its sweetness.—Humiliation—the bitterest regret—nay, even danger appeared to be comprehended in this event! Again he was reduced to blush before his son and wife—again he looked back upon the past with grief, and upon the future step it necessarily entailed upon him with apprehension. To receive the Hungarian under his own roof at a period when every thing likely to pass there would be mysterious;—when his stay—his departure—his connections, were of necessity such as he wished to bury in profound secrecy, was of all steps most hazardous; yet did it seem unavoidable; and there was even somewhat in the tone with which Conrad had uttered the narrative, as well as the penetrating observation of his eye, that seemed to show him alive to the necessity of making such a reparation for the injury inflicted on a stranger.

To counterbalance the many evils this unfortunate incident thus threatened, it was to be remembered that the very circumstance of that stranger's being suspected, proved the intendant's total ignorance of the private doors of communication: that the Hungarian would be no less anxious to quit a spot that must be odious to his feelings, than the count would be to dismiss him! Finally, and in itself an argument more conclusive than any other, all that Baron Stralenheim could know with respect to his vicinity to the count, he probably did; all he could do, he unquestionably would! These reflections passed with the rapidity of lightning through the mind of Siegendorf; and almost at the moment of making them, he announced to his wife and son his intention of braving that danger to which he had himself exposed the Hungarian, by receiving him under his roof. Josephine paused over this. She, nevertheless, felt, like her husband, that something was due to the innocence they had involuntarily wronged; and the opinion of Conrad, though not expressed, was not to be doubted.

The count on his part now hastily related the arrangement made between himself and Idenstein. None more eligible, that could by any method be rendered secure, presented itself to the imagination of either party: and as Siegendorf had calculated that he should not be many hours on his route before he crossed the borders, there was reasonable ground for supposing that they might then, without much risk, remedy the inconvenience that would attend their mode of traveling. For this purpose Conrad supplied his father with gold, and the baths of Carlsbad were appointed as the spot where he should rejoin them.

Those sweet moments of repose in which all had indulged were now, as before, rapidly passing away:—they were even already past; and such had been the tumult and perplexities attendant on their meeting that not one had been asked of those many interesting and important questions each so earnestly desired to hear answered. To prolong the stay of Conrad was to direct suspicion to him: and perhaps to involve him in that fate, which, should it overtake the count, he only could rescue him from. That he would do so, natural affection assured his parents; that he must do so, the mere tie of self-interest was sufficient to attest: for even the short explanation that had arisen made it sufficiently clear that without the personal appearance of the count the legitimacy of his son would perhaps be ever contested. Yet his personal appearance, should the measures of Stralenheim prove successful, might, if not wholly prevented, be so long delayed as to give the latter that most dangerous of all rights, possession. To obviate this, however, every step had now been taken that caution could suggest; and the heart of Siegendorf, animated by the occasion, poured itself out with manly and inartificial magnanimity into the bosoms of his wife and son. Conrad listened with the deepest attention, and felt at length persuaded, by his own observation, that he had mistaken the character of his father; who, though the slave of passion, was not deliberately capable of those actions it seemed to prompt. It was a doubt of the first importance to him to solve, and on which he had in consequence anxiously meditated.

Half an hour had hardly elapsed from the departure of Conrad when the Hungarian entered. He was not entirely unknown to Josephine, but she had noticed him little when they last met. To the count he was wholly a stranger; and the latter, who knew not exactly the degree of confidence placed in him by Conrad with respect to the relative situations of all parties, though aware that it must be a limited one, prepared to receive him with kind but cautious hospitality. He was not impressed favorably, however, by his appearance. The Hungarian was indeed devoid of those exterior advantages by which his countrymen are generally distinguished. He was low in stature and swarthy. His features were not plain, but their expression was disagreeable: and he had the air of a man who has seen and suffered much. His step and deportment, however, were military; and, together with his address, announced self-possession. In the eyes of the count and Josephine, which had so lately rested on the distinguished person of their son, that of their guest appeared to a particular disadvantage, nor could they avoid secretly feeling as if Stralenheim and the intendant had not been altogether so wild in their conjectures as they had at first concluded. The stranger just touched upon the peculiarities of his situation, and the insults he had received, like one who felt them too resentfully to be diffuse: and he seemed besides somewhat restrained by a doubt whether his host had been made any party in the story: on his own side he seemed to have received no further communication from Conrad than such as might lead him to suppose the family before him had once seen brighter days. He professed it to be his resolution to depart early the next morning at all hazards: and the count, who was secretly anxious that he should, found, on reflection, an additional motive for desiring it: since, should the Hungarian effect the journey, it would afford a certainty that the roads would be practicable for himself and his family. Josephine now retired to rest, and Siegendorf and his guest soon after parted; but on the nerves or the imagination of the former an impression had been made not easily to be shaken off: he was haunted by a strange and vague suspicion that the Hungarian, despite of all appearances, would, in the end, prove some secret emissary of the baron, and that both himself and his son were duped into receiving as a guest one who was in fact only a spy. Unwilling, therefore, to trust the general safety to a stranger, the count continued to watch during the greater part of the night: sometimes traversing the room, at others meditating in profound silence, or attempting to read. Day-light at length surprised him: when softly advancing towards the chamber of his guest he found him fast asleep.—Ashamed of his own doubts he at length threw himself on the bed, and snatched a few hours of repose. It was consequently not early when he awaked; and Josephine, alarmed at his long watching the night before, as well as the unusual season he had chosen for slumber, was anxiously near him:—to his great satisfaction he found that the Hungarian was gone.

The softness of the air and a bright sun gave favorable promise for the day. Before it was half over Idenstein made his appearance. He was in extreme good humor with himself for having out-witted the intendant; who, it was now clear, he thought, excluded him from the sight and confidence of Stralenheim. He announced to the count the welcome intelligence that the inundation already began to subside; that there could be no question but before the dawn of the ensuing day the country would be passable; and that the messenger dispatched to Frankfort, angry at being again sent off on what he believed to be both a perilous and fruitless expedition, had between his ill humor and his haste, forgotten the bag of dispatches—an oversight which Idenstein had taken care should not be discovered at the palace till it was too late to recall him, and which he, probably, would not discover himself till he had completed his journey. Idenstein laughed heartily at the success of his own schemes, and the lucky combination of circumstances that favored them. Nor was he sparing of his expressions of satisfaction in thus balking the sulky baron and his sagacious assistant.

Welcome as this intelligence was, in all its points, to the count, he was, nevertheless, in no disposition to enjoy it. As the moment of his own departure approached, he was was worked up to a pitch of impatience he could hardly govern or endure. The period between the present hour and that of his journey was as a sort of "phantasma, or a hideous dream:" and the only particular he was truly anxious to know was whether Idenstein meant to fulfill his promise faithfully with regard to the vehicle and the horse. This he engaged to do after the close of evening, and he was then to obtain his reward. It was from that moment, therefore, the fears, the tortures of the count were to be doubled!—for, the jewel once given, what should secure the fidelity of the receiver?

Previous to the last parting between Conrad and his parents, it had been settled on both sides that, to avoid all observation, he should appear under their roof no more. It was, nevertheless, his intention to remain within reach of the baron, whether at M—— or elsewhere, till Siegendorf might reasonably be supposed safe from pursuit. Nor would Conrad in this arrangement admit the possibility of hazard to himself, whatever the tender anxiety of those he spoke to might dispose them to make: and even the count was obliged, after the storm of his passions had subsided, to acknowledge that no probable reason could be assigned that should lead Stralenheim to suspect the secret tie and relationship of Conrad. Prudence had induced the latter to point out to his father the necessity of their re-union before either entered Prague. The neighborhood of the baths of Carlsbad had been fixed upon as the most eligible spot for this purpose; and Siegendorf, while attending there the approach of his son, proposed to open a communication with the metropolis, to prepare the way for his own personal appearance; and to proceed forward immediately on the arrival of Conrad, with every circumstance of splendor and family concord that could give validity to their claims. Such at least was the intention announced by the count:—but his inmost soul did not confirm it! an ill-omened voice seemed incessantly to issue from thence, and to silence, with the force of presentiment, every hope he studiously cherished. It was not feebleness of mind; or, if feebleness, it was confined in its operation to a single idea:—for to all the accompanying ones he presented an undaunted, and almost heroic resolution: but he was secretly persuaded that he should never escape Stralenheim:—and he was right:—he never did escape him!

On the surface, however, every thing went well. The day continued fine; the flood obviously subsided; and soon after dark Idenstein fulfilled his promise: so disposing the horse and caleche, that should they, in the event, appear to have been left by him, he had reason to flatter himself that the count's appropriation of them would rather wear the air of a fraudulent seizure, than a private convention of the parties. Siegendorf earnestly scrutinized the features of his ally before he parted with the ring. He saw much foolish exultation in them, but no insincerity: in fact, there was none to see. The most mature deliberation had not pointed out to Idenstein any motive of interest stronger than that he was now pursuing; and he, therefore, as heartily wished the count gone, as the other wished himself. He failed not, however, to make him reiterate his promise of redeeming the pledge at a high price, whenever occasion allowed of his doing so, and of further rewarding the service now rendered. On his part, he swore solemnly to the faithful performance of all he had engaged for; and, having received his recompense, walked triumphantly home—never from that moment to know peace, safety, or advantage, in its possession.

He must be a deep dissembler who evades all suspicion in a heart and eye keenly alive to it. The count felt, at length, something like conviction that Idenstein was no such character. He had turned his steps, therefore, with a satisfied mind towards Josephine, when the steps of some one entering arrested his attention. He looked hastily round, and saw, not without a mingled sensation of surprise and displeasure, that it was the Hungarian. There was, however, nothing alarming attended the reappearance of the latter, except in the circumstance of re-appearing at all. He professed himself weary and exhausted; and the account he gave of his absence was such as, while simple, wore the air of truth. The flood, though hourly sinking, proved, upon trial, not to have sufficiently subsided to enable a stranger to ascertain the track. He had, nevertheless, made the experiment in different directions, and had in all encountered a degree of danger which had deterred him from proceeding; till being, at length, assured by the peasants that a very few hours would allow him to accomplish without hazard what it was evident would at that juncture be attended with much, he had given up the undertaking, and, putting his horse in one of the numerous out-stables of his highness, had returned, again to claim the hospitality of his former host. He added, that he met Conrad not long before, who recommended to him the step he had now taken.

In the round of possible events there was hardly any from which the mind of Siegendorf would have revolted more powerfully than from the simple one that thus presented itself. He had conceived an invincible disgust to the Hungarian from the very first moment he had seen him!—a disgust which he was conscious originated chiefly in that sense of humiliation the presence of the latter could not but inspire, by recalling to his memory the most disgraceful incident of his life. He had struggled vigorously against the injustice of his own suspicions, and it was only a few hours before that he had smiled at their fallacy: they now at once recurred in full force. The very consciousness that they did so, taught him to spurn a feeling which he conceived to be as unmanly and degrading as he supposed it ill-founded. It was not possible, indeed, for him to conceal from the Hungarian that his appearance was unexpected, and, it might be surmised, undesired: yet he controlled himself so far as to receive his guest with tokens of hospitality, and invited him to partake the frugal meal to which he was himself sitting down. The Hungarian, who stood in need of refreshment, accepted the offer. He was no talker:—but there was something clear and impressive in his language when he spoke: and his voice, equally full and sonorous, was of that sort which the ear when it has once received never forgets. His remarks, however, as well as the general character of his mind, had a hardness peculiarly offensive to that of the count; and though it was easy to perceive that he had lived much in the world, and had observed closely upon it, the impression he made upon his host was not at all more favorable than before. Busy imagination too still pointed out something particularly sinister, alarming, and watchful in his eyes: yet the evil of admitting him, whatever his consequences, could neither be remedied nor further guarded against. His discourse betrayed that he was vindictive; and policy, therefore, no less than justice, extorted from the count all the exterior offices of courtesy. They at length parted. The Hungarian, as before, retired to rest; and Josephine, at the earnest entreaty and almost command of her husband, did the same.

But the power Siegendorf had exerted over her, he could not extend to himself. He continued to walk the ante-room till the watching of the two preceding nights at length stupefied and overwhelmed him: when, throwing himself into a chair by her bed-side, he gave way to what he believed to be mere momentary drowsiness. Josephine watched likewise for a considerable time, till her own eyes, which had involuntarily shared the vigils of his the night before, though he had not imparted their true cause, became heavy: the profound tranquillity of all around, and the soft breathings of her child, who lay on a matrass not far distant, united to lull her, as well as

Siegendorf, to repose: her eyelids at length closed; and, in a few moments after, all three were buried in a deep sleep. That of the count, though apparently calm, was far from being really so. Confused images still continued to flit before him with all the force of the most frightful realities. Stralenheim, the Hungarian, and even Idenstein, alternately harassed his imagination:—the scene then changed; he lost sight of them; and, by a rapid transition, fancied himself within the limits of his own castle at Siegendorf. His father was alive there: but pale—meager—hollow-eyed. On a sudden the figure ceased to be really his father, and became a specter. He would have avoided it—but it followed—it persecuted—it haunted him!—In the midst of these, and similar chimeras, the count started and awoke. The watch-light, which was more than half consumed, announced the near approach of morning; and Josephine, whom his start had disturbed, awoke also; both instantly arose. Breathless with impatience, Siegendorf hastened to assure himself that the horse and vehicle were still under cover. All was precisely as he had left it the night before. He harnessed the horse with his own hands, and disposed their little baggage in the manner most commodious for traveling. Josephine meantime was preparing a scanty breakfast of pottage for the little Marcellin, when, at the moment that her husband re-entered the house, both recollected the Hungarian. The count advanced towards his chamber-door: it was slightly closed, but not fastened. He looked in, and perceived with some surprise that his guest was gone. A moment's reflection on the past told him that the street-door had been unbarred when he himself first descended; and a glance towards the future seemed to announce that the Hungarian was somewhere stationed to detain him. There was no leisure, however, to pause over the mystery: life or death—liberty or destruction—seemed to hang upon the point of time before them; and whatever might be the schemes that baffled or opposed their departure, the die was cast—the effort must be made.

The moon in the interim had sunk, and it was yet dark; the count, whose anxiety for those he was to guide, induced him to hesitate between the opposing dangers of precipitation or delay, once more quitted the house, to judge from the fading of the stars how near it was to sunrise. He had gazed earnestly on them for some moments, when, by their pale and uncertain light, he saw the branches shake in a part of the garden nearest that of the palace: some loose stones fell from the wall, and a man at the same instant was seen to leap it. Siegendorf advanced hastily, but by the form and step perceived that the intruder could be no other than Conrad. Touched with this proof of filial anxiety the count quickened his pace; but he was startled with the fierce demeanor and menacing gesture of his son.

"Stop!" said the latter, in an imperious, though smothered tone, and while they were yet at some paces' distance, "Before we approach each other, tell me whether I see my father or a murderer?"—Siegendorf paused in astonishment; but unable to understand him, again advanced near enough to perceive that he was extremely pale and agitated beyond all common convulsions of the soul.

"Answer, as you value the life of either!" again exclaimed Conrad, motioning his father from him.

"Insolent young man! to what would you have me answer?"

"Are you, or are you not, the murderer of Baron Stralenheim?"

"I was never yet the murderer of any man," replied the count fiercely; and starting in his turn some paces back;—"What is it you mean?"

"Did you not last night enter the secret gallery?—Did you not penetrate to the chamber of Stralenheim?—Did he"—and his voice suddenly faltered,—"Did he not die privately by your hand?"

The count, who at length comprehended the horrible mystery included in his son's words, turned pale and aghast: while Conrad, bending distrustfully forward, gazed at him as though his very soul would have passed through his eyes, in order to ascertain the nature of the emotion his father sustained. The wan and quivering countenance of the latter spoke a language not to be misunderstood.

"You are then innocent?" said Conrad, emphatically. —In terms fearfully solemn, the count uttered an imprecation on himself, if his hand had ever executed, or his heart conceived, a project of deliberate assassination.

"Baron Stralenheim is, however, dead," continued Conrad, after a long and gloomy pause. "It is past doubt that his chamber has been secretly entered this night. Yet no bar has been forced—No appearance of violence is to be discovered, save on his person. His household has been alarmed—the intendant is stupefied in a second debauch, and incapable of exertion. I, therefore, took upon myself the care of summoning the police:—Nature and filial duty must plead my pardon if"—he stopped in a tone of strong emotion. Siegendorf, who, in its imperfect expression, at once comprehended all the terrible struggles that could not fail to arise at such a juncture between nature and honor in a noble mind, agitated with the consciousness of his own degraded situation—the affecting contrast of his son's virtues—the danger—the disgrace—the infamy he saw prepared for them all, threw himself upon the neck of Conrad, and, for the first time in his life, wept bitterly. The language of truth carries with it an eloquence that is rarely doubted, and the count read his acquittal in the eyes of his son.

"Yet you have no guests—no domestics—no visitors," said Conrad in a tone of rapid interrogation, as his mind seemed still eagerly to revolve all the possible chances of danger from the fatally mysterious passage. Siegendorf suddenly struck his hands together, and repeated the name of the Hungarian.

"He is gone!—He went yesterday!"

"No!—he returned!"

"When?—At what time?"

"Last night!"

"And he slept—"

"In the only chamber I had to offer him—the last, and dangerous one!"—Conrad, without speaking, made a hasty and impatient motion towards the house.

"It is too late," said the count, stopping him; "you will only terrify your mother;—the Hungarian is gone!'

A deep and gloomy abstraction seemed for some moments to impose silence on both. Conrad did not break it, but the unhappy Siegendorf in agony of soul at length loudly cursed that indiscretion on his own part which had thus exposed them to danger; and traced, though too late, in the hard and vindictive character of his guest, all the portentous warnings of a bloody catastrophe!—That catastrophe, bloody as it had proved, was past!—Stralenheim no longer lived either to suffer or to hope! It was Siegendorf who now stood the devoted victim! more surely so by the destruction of his enemy than by the bitterest rancor of his life! Vainly did the removal of that enemy clear from his path the sole obstacle to honors and to fortune! Between him and all that he could claim, all that he could hope, a black and dreadful chasm had opened, impossible as it appeared to pass:—for where was he to find the Hungarian? How prove the crime upon him, or, when proved, exonerate himself from the charge of being at least an accessory?

Conrad, through whose imagination these and a thousand other difficulties and dangers were tumultuously rushing, yet saw, and pointed out with that vigor which marked his character, the favorable chances that remained. Obscure and unknown as Kruitzner was, what individual at M—— was to suspect in him the princely fortunes and hereditary distinctions of Count Siegendorf? Who could divine the connection between his fate and that of the baron? Who was likely, for a time at least, to discover the possibility of Kruitzner's effecting the crime, or, when discovered, find a clue sufficiently unequivocal to guide him through that labyrinth in which the sullen pride and crooked policy of Stralenheim, together with the mysterious situation of his adversary, had placed them both?—No letters had yet reached Frankfort—none would probably ever reach it:—for how would Idenstein now venture to produce, what he had once so indiscreetly concealed?—At the worst, the count's name in the dispatches was probably a borrowed one; and what testimony was to prove the identity of his person?—Who was even interested in doing it? Stralenheim was an individual of but common rank in his own country, in any other he was insignificant; on the spot where he had perished he was solitary. Law, palsied in its operations by the influence of circumstances, would do little: justice and promptitude might do every thing: they might teach the innocent man to rescue himself by a vigorous effort from that ambiguous situation to which he was in danger of falling a victim, and place him as far out of the reach of any present enemy as fate had now placed him out of the reach of a former one. Every moment, however, became valuable! A dreadful responsibility was attached to Conrad, and each instant as it passed threatened to make his stay fatal. Even at the period when he believed his father guilty, he had had the precaution not to expose him to suspicion by entering his doors. The former stood now fully acquitted in his eyes, and to guard him was consequently no less the duty of his justice than of his heart. The count it was obvious therefore must fly, and that instantly: the means seemed providentially prepared. It was equally clear to both that Conrad must remain; since, by becoming the companion of their flight, he would at once have exposed the connection between himself and his family, and doubled the danger of all: nor was he of a character to shrink from danger in any form; much less in that remote and doubtful one which attended his stay. The moment the secret doors of communication were discovered, as during the minute researches of the police they inevitably must be, Kruitzner and the Hungarian would alike become the decided objects of suspicion. The active character of Conrad might yet find means to trace out the retreat of the latter; and should his own relationship to the former remain unsuspected, as there was every reason to conclude it would do, he might without difficulty so misdirect pursuit, as materially to favor the flight of his father. With a sense of humiliation that could not but be painful, he himself pointed out this circumstance; and was reduced, with whatever reluctance, to sink the demands of a nice but savage honor in the tender and indispensable duties of a son.

Arrangements that have their foundation in necessity are almost intuitively understood: those for the count's journey had been previously made. A very few moments served to decide all that remained; and hardly one was given to that embrace which each party painfully felt might be their last. Conrad a second time named the baths of Carlsbad as the place of meeting, if they were ever to meet again!—After which most earnestly recommending dispatch and vigor to his father, he once more leaped the wall, and Siegendorf once more found himself alone.—Alone indeed!—or rather in a horrible gloom, peopled with frightful and distorted images, which presented to him the specters of a guilty mind even in the moment of innocence. A single quarter of an hour appeared to have changed the position of every existing object, of every relative feeling!—He looked around, and hardly believed the same heaven shone over his head, or that the ground was solid beneath his feet.—He looked within, and found it even more difficult to conceive that his enemy was annihilated: that all traces of him would soon be concealed from every human eye: that he lived only to his; and that, by an almost incredible transition, he was himself obliged to lament his fate! He began to feel that he should now, indeed, never escape him; that a strange ordination entwined their fates with each other; and that the grave must close on both, ere it could snap the mysterious link of memory.

Josephine, who had for some time anxiously waited the return of her husband, at length came to seek him. At sight of her he started from the wild and tumultuous contemplation in which he had been engaged, and her presence, like that of a spirit of light, seemed for a while to dispel all evil. Snatching Marcellin by the hand, he now eagerly, though silently, led both towards their little vehicle, and placed them in it, where it stood in the road, sheltered by the extremity of the garden wall.—The growing light of the sun was just visible on the tops of the distant mountains: the early cocks began to crow: every eye and every shutter as yet seemed closed in the town, when Siegendorf, at length, drove rapidly from it, carrying away with him confused images of blood, robbery, assassination, and disgrace, which he had traveled many leagues before he could dissipate.

The low and marshy grounds of the neighborhood were passed with a celerity that did not permit them to see the dangers to which they exposed themselves. In proportion as they receded from the vicinity of the Oder, the traces of inundation, which had chiefly laid on the side towards Frankfort, disappeared; and the road became progressively firmer. They had been before so close upon the frontier as quickly to find themselves beyond the boundaries of Silesia; and the count was well aware that the incessant hostilities which had long prevailed throughout the whole range of country, though now suspended in consequence of an armistice that was believed to be the forerunner of a general peace, had so shaken the very foundations of civil society, that the intermediate links between each district were broken; and the police no where sufficiently connected to reclaim any fugitive beyond a limit so narrow, that it was in all probability past. They already breathed the purer air of the high-lands, and found the benefit of the increasing light: that sacred stillness with which nature in elevated regions seems to receive the new-born day, was calculated, in its constitutional effects, to silence the irritation of the nerves and the heart. By degrees the soft lines of the horizon strengthened and became embodied: light shade and colors successively diffused themselves over the surrounding objects; and all was beauty and harmony, save in the restless imagination of the count, and the anxious feelings of his wife. Josephine, who had ever at intervals continued to look back, on reaching the heights directed her eye, as far as its power could extend, to the whole tract of country around: it presented one vast and tranquil solitude, disturbed only by the soft undulations that swept before the breeze. A faint blue vapor, which seemed to rise like smoke from the valley, and was just visible between broken hills, announced, however, to her imagination at least, the hateful spot where so much sorrow and suffering had been encountered; and, with an eternal adieu, she blended a sigh at the recollection that it still detained Conrad. Alas! how would her maternal heart have been wrung with apprehension, could she have divined the circumstances under which he remained!

Before the travelers lay the woods that bound Lusatia to the east, and stretch in long and blackening shadow southwards towards Bohemia. It was the intention of the count to skirt these, and on entering Saxony slowly emerge from the debasement and poverty to which circumstances had subjected him. In the progress of his journey it was not, however, among the least of his sufferings that anxiety for the possible fate of Conrad would not allow him to confide to the tender feelings of Josephine that gloomy secret which engrossed so large a share of his own: or even strengthen the belief he himself entertained, that the danger of pursuit had, from the moment of their departure, been far less than she suspected: for what individual, in the tumult and horror of those scenes which must immediately have succeeded, was likely to turn his attention to a being apparently so insignificant as Kruitzner?—*His* enemy was silenced! *His* pursuer slept in eternal forgetfulness of all he had so lately coveted—all he had confidently assured himself that morning's sun would secure to him! The intendant, it was plain by the report of Conrad, was in no condition to take the directing power out of the hands of the latter: Idenstein had most probably shared his excesses; and, were it otherwise, had, by a conduct alike venal and worthless, inadvertently involved his own fate so deeply with that of Kruitzner as obviously to render it more his interest to withhold, than to forward, any cause of suspicion against the latter. There, nevertheless, yet existed one crafty and vindictive being Siegendorf believed he ought reasonably to fear; and whom, of all others, though to him his crime had been useful, he was most inclined to abhor:—it was the Hungarian; who, if yet lurking in the woods, might prove a dangerous enemy, because a desperate one. The count was, however, not defenceless; for Conrad, previous to their last parting, had supplied him with arms.

The travelers at length entered upon the entanglements of the forest, and had no other guide than the wheel-tracks formed by the peasant supplied. But though at a distance all had appeared dark and somber, nature, at a nearer approach, put on a more smiling aspect, and seemed to delight in contrasting that gloom with which the vices and miseries of man had disfigured her. The sun had long been above the horizon, and had dispersed a thousand fleecy though beautiful clouds which had hitherto impeded his brightness. His rays sometimes checkered the ground, and were sometimes wholly excluded by clustered branches, that were yet only covered with the light foliage of spring. A rich and dewy moisture lay on the underwood beneath; at intervals reposing on patches of turf, that thus assumed the appearance of velvet, or swelled into large drops, which, trembling from the points of the leaves, sparkled like so many diamonds. The air was perfumed with fragrance, and the thickets filled with numerous sportive, but timid animals, seldom visible to the eye, though they occasionally scudded before it: while the birds, more secure in their airy habitations, answered each other in that delightful language which is at once music to the heart and the ear.—Josephine, who in the contemplation of nature experienced a sacred feeling, that, while it swells the soul with rapture, fills the eye with tears, laid her hand in silence on that of her husband, and gently checked the speed with which he was driving.

> "For, over all, she saw the form divine,
> The Uncreate, in the created, shine,
> Bright as in drops of dew the sun's reflected beam!"

The count, startled by the action, looked earnestly around for some cause of alarm, and then at her. He had mechanically, rather than from any effort of will, continued to urge the horse forward: he now loosed him, and gave him a short but necessary respite.

Although Siegendorf and his family could hardly be said to enjoy safety in the forest, they yet encountered no positive danger there. The simplicity and meanness of their appearance offered little temptation to the wealthy robber, and from petty plunderers the athletic form, and undaunted eye of the count, was in itself a sufficient protection. As they approached the borders of Saxony, they frequently met light parties of troops who scoured the country: but though by these they were casually reconnoitred, they were never detained, and they found themselves at length decidedly within the territories of the electorate. Siegendorf, who was now familiar with almost every spot through which he was to pass, judged no method so certain of confounding all personal identity as that of pursuing their road by way of Leipsig. It was near the season of the fair, and a prodigious concourse of strangers were daily assembling from all parts of Germany of a rank and description precisely opposite to those with whom the count had ever associated.—There was little probability that he should be recognized by any one; and Josephine was totally unknown. They, therefore, entered the gates of the city, in company with many others, at a late hour, and, stationing themselves in an obscure quarter, enjoyed a short and salutary repose. From thence, slowly journeying forward through devious roads, they daily increased their comforts, till they approached Carlsbad; where, on arriving, all traces of the abject and impoverished Kruitzner were finally absorbed in the increasing splendor and princely titles of Count Siegendorf.

The count had not proceeded thus far on his journey without having found leisure to weigh more maturely the danger that attended not completing it. He had now reached that spot where he had pledged himself to wait the arrival of Conrad: an event his heart eagerly panted for, but which his prudence suggested to him to be a subordinate consideration to that of entering Prague. Various reasons daily concurred to strengthen this opinion: yet perhaps amongst them that restless inquietude which ever agitates the human heart at the near approach of any interesting struggle, and disposes it at all hazards to rush on to certainty, was not the least. A communication the count succeeded in establishing with one of his father's friends, informed him, that no claimant to the family estates and honors had hitherto appeared. The total silence which had long prevailed with regard to himself, had, however, led to a general conclusion that he was no more. There was apparently, therefore, no reason to doubt but Conrad, if on the spot, would have been the admitted heir. But the count's correspondent added that his son had disappeared several weeks before the death of his grandfather, and that public expectation was at a loss to decide "whether, from some peculiar circumstances in which he was supposed to stand, the claims of the collateral branch might not be received in preference to his."

Siegendorf, assured that these circumstances referred to the birth of Conrad, and alive at once to all the danger of leaving conjecture busy with the name of either, perceived that his personal appearance alone could silence it. The occasion was critical, and loudly forbade all delicacy or delay: yet could he not resolve on re-entering Prague without experiencing a sensation that shook his very soul. The ill-omened hour in which he had quitted it returned to his imagination in vivid colors; and a thousand painful as well as humiliating recollections of the past started forward, to blend with a sort of half-apprehension from the novelty and strangeness of the future. He had no longer a father—hardly a country—still less a friend!—expatriated as he had been, and shook as the nation itself was to its very foundations, he felt that he should at best be recognized by it without being known—allowed without being claimed. Under this impression, he entered the gates like a man who expects them every moment to be closed against him; till well-remembered and familiar spots once more saluting his eye, he at length began to breathe freely: to rouse from that state of agitation which for a while rendered all objects visionary; to feel that he was still the son of Count Siegendorf; and to assure himself that the sorrow or degradation of the past was to be ranked henceforward among those fearful chimeras conjured up by the indiscretion of youth, and which fade of themselves before the season of maturity. This was, unhappily, a disposition of mind the count was ever too much disposed to indulge. He had a natural propensity towards classing every error into which he plunged among the chances of the moment:—an insignificant link in the great chain of human events; and well deserving, therefore, to be snapped from it. The materials with which man forges his own fetters are seldom, however, of so brittle a nature!—but grievously as his had eaten into his soul, they had not yet changed its character: and, indeed, a judgment far more steady would probably have been shaken from its equilibrium by the sudden transition to a station so splendid as that which he was now entitled to demand.

Elevating and tumultuous as the secret feelings of Siegendorf became, the deep-rooted pride of his nature, nevertheless, enabled him to conceal them. His exterior presented a man chastened, not subdued:—self-governed, not humbled:—and who, in the resumption of his rights, felt nothing so strongly as his claims to them. The city was at that period rising from its own ashes. Repeated sieges and pillage had reduced the inhabitants to despair, when the treaty,* which was on the point of being ratified, once more awakened all to vigorous exertion. The states were solemnly assembling, and Siegendorf presented himself before them like one arisen from the grave. There was something in the incident peculiarly in unison with the whole condition of society. All that was great or illustrious had undergone a temporary eclipse, and the hearts of men leaned with indulgence to every thing that looked like the restoration of order. Of those nobles whom the count formerly believed his enemies, many had disappeared, as he had prophetically deemed they would, amidst the political convulsions of the times: others, who retained only a confused recollection of the past, were struck with silent respect at his appearance and demeanor: while the larger body, by whom the name of Siegendorf was habitually honored, acknowledged, after little hesitation, the family lineaments and claims: the count was received as its genuine representative with a facility he had no reason to expect: its estates were made over to him; and he took formal possession of all the privileges and rights of nobility.

The proudly cherished hope of his heart, so long deferred, was then at length completed! Neither his own errors, nor the resentment of his father, had defeated his fortune! Josephine, in defiance of all obstacles, was raised to that eminence on which he had so much desired to place her: Conrad only was impatiently looked for to fill the void in his affections; and neither ambition nor avarice could covet any gift that did not present itself at the shrine of his pride!

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* The peace of Prague, signed May, 1635.

Amid reflections thus gratifying, the count could not forget that two acts of self-humiliation yet remained to be fulfilled, before he could so discharge the past from his mind, as fully to enjoy the future. The gold of the miserable Stralenheim was cankering on his hands and in his heart. Both pride and sensibility imperiously demanded its immediate application to some pious purpose; and it was accepted with gratitude by the religious of a neighboring convent. The person and character of the donor were not unknown there, and they believed that God was calling home to himself a penitent, whose licentious life extorted from him this atonement.—The second act of duty, though not less indispensable, carried with it a sort of blended feeling from which he would willingly have shrunk, had decorum permitted: the self-acquittal it seemed to promise, nevertheless, induced him to fulfill it; and with a lingering and reluctant heart he turned his steps toward the grave of his father.

Count Siegendorf had been buried in the great church at Prague: nor could his son see without emotion the simple monument dedicated to his memory; the sole memorial of one, who, whatever his faults, had fondly loved him! A sense of compunction irresistibly obtruded as he remembered the paternal remonstrances so often made on one side, and the filial reparation so vainly promised on the other!—All was now over! his father slept in that quiet sanctuary where no reparation could reach him, and whence no voice, save that of conscience, ever yet issued to a son! The count, after a confused and painful meditation of some moments, turned from the spot. He then ordered a magnificent piece of sculpture to be placed over it; and the relative ideas, if not expelled from his bosom, were at least blended with such as more immediately interested him, when, on his return home, he found a billet from Conrad. It was forwarded from Carlsbad by the courier who had been dispatched thither to receive either that or the writer, and announced the speedy approach of the latter; communicating at the same time, in mysterious terms, the important intelligence that all had gone well since they parted.

The count, relieved thus from the deep anxiety he had hitherto experienced with respect to the situation of his son, now prepared to revisit his own patrimonial estates. Princely as they were, and defended by the vassals of the family, they had not wholly escaped devastation, though their vicinity to Prague had secured them from an evil more horrible than even war itself had inflicted. Arms were, indeed, no longer the sole employment of Bohemia; but, unhappily, that licentiousness which too often becomes the habit of a nation after any long and bloody struggle, had not subsided there. For more than twenty years all Germany had been a theater of warfare and desolation, where numerous hordes of banditti, lurking in the fastnesses of mountains, and in the recesses of forests, were ready to pour down upon the weak or the unguarded. Mercenaries in the open field, it was not wonderful that in private scenes of action, such men should become robbers and assassins. Yet, vailing the atrocity of their conduct under specious pretences, they frequently gave the name of justice to the most bloody revenge: and in default of those laws, to which indeed the circumstances of the times allowed little efficacy, they executed their own verdicts with the most unrelenting cruelty. Nor were these excesses confined to the base or the ignorant alone: souls class themselves; and among the higher orders of the community, some stood strongly suspected by the state of allying the human too closely to the animal nature; and of wasting in savage and ferocious pleasures those gifts which were bestowed for the sacred purposes of protection and kindness. The enormities of such men had not even the common palliation of necessity to excuse them: riotous, on the contrary, with prosperity and youth, their faculties, like some kind of plants, seemed to have grown rank by the very richness and exuberance of the soil on which they fell. From invaders like these, no spot had hitherto been secure: they came, no one knew whence: vanished, no one knew whither: and when they re-appeared, it was in such scenes of splendor or force, as suspicion dare not invade. Their partisans, as well as themselves, were invisible; and, like the cur who slaughters the sheep in the night, reposed sleek and quiet at their master's door in the morning.

The castle of Siegendorf, covering a territory in itself, and equally secured by its bulwarks and neighborhood to the metropolis, bore, however, no traces of a desolation from the contemplation of which the soft and almost voluptuous character of the count induced him to revolt with peculiar horror. His return there, at a crisis so little expected, seemed to operate like a charm upon every individual within his estates. Crowds to whom he was personally unknown hastened to greet him. Nature herself seemed to welcome his approach, and to put forth the loveliest colors of her loveliest season. Joy, acclamation, and an enlivening spirit, pursued his footsteps: the young spoke with generous indignation of the reports handed down by their elders; while the latter, to whom the excesses of his youthful days were known, saw with delight and surprise the alteration time appeared to have effected. They admired the temperate dignity of his manner, the equanimity with which he entered again upon his former fortunes, and the sobriety of his domestic establishment: they were never weary of gazing on Josephine and her blooming boy: the castle was presently filled with innumerable retainers; together with all the pomp, civil or military, of a baron of the feudal times; and it was at the crisis of universal festivity that Conrad arrived to partake it.

The past, however, it quickly appeared, had not faded from the recollection of Conrad in the same degree it seemed to have done from that of his father: and his presence, therefore, by an effect to others wholly inexplicable, at once chilled the glow of exultation and felicity in the bosom of the latter. The events that yet remained to be related by Conrad were, indeed, of a nature again to darken the imagination of both: however favorable in themselves, they were, at best, but the winding up of a black and gloomy tragedy; and all the horrible suggestions that arise from blood yet unappeased insensibly presented themselves, and mingled with the detail. That reluctance the count had ever felt to shocking Josephine with it, had been increased by his late habits of reserve, and became almost invincible, when he reflected on the security and happiness in which she now reposed. He himself learned with deep, though useless, and therefore silent regret, that the Hungarian had escaped all research. That the intendant, stunned by the danger he apprehended from his own indiscretion, had, for the most part, confided in Conrad, or taken such feeble and undecided steps as were of little avail in the pursuit of the criminal. That Idenstein, equally selfish, had even tacitly assisted to baffle the measures he pretended to enforce, through fear of being involved in their consequences. Finally, that the wretched Stralenheim—unknown, unlamented—had been hurried to an obscure grave; and that vague depositions, lodged in the hands of magistrates little disposed to interest themselves in the fate of an alien, seemed all the reparation likely to attend his memory.

Selfish and proud as was the nature of the count, there was constitutionally a sort of tender point in it, which the mode of his very pleasures and pursuits had contributed to increase. Mystery and blood were offensive to his imagination: yet had he so closely entwined both in his own fate, as to render it almost impossible to free his recollection from either. Nor was his pride less wounded than his sensibility, when he remembered that there existed a spot upon the globe, where, though he himself might indeed remain for ever unknown, his person was devoted to infamy; where the name he had borne would be deemed synonymous with robbery and murder; and where to be seen only, was to incur the penalty of the rack!

These were particulars Conrad could not conceal: nor did the character of the latter appear gifted with the refinement that might have taught him to think it necessary to do so. The past still seemed too strongly impressed upon his mind to permit him to lose sight of it: and Siegendorf, who, in the tumultuous succession of feelings incident to his own change of fortune, had lost, for a time, the bitterness of retrospection so long the habit of his heart, yet knew well how to allow for it in that of his son. Conrad, nevertheless, felt for his mother; and strongly urged the count to conceal from her a secret offensive to the sensibility of her sex, and which might encumber her with a thousand weak fears, or superfluous regrets, calculated to embitter the future lives of all. Siegendorf had discernment enough to trace in the tender consideration thus shown by his son a proud repugnance to the avowal of those degradations which the circumstances of his situation obliged him to submit to: but it was an allowable pride; it had yielded only to the safety of his father; nor could the latter resolve to extort a further sacrifice from it: he, therefore, acceded to a reserve he had never till lately practiced towards Josephine; and, with a generous, though half-sullen tenderness, strove to confine to himself feelings he yet found it would be impossible ever to silence;—the aching consciousness of a sullied mind—a sort of accessory guilt—and an indefinite remorse!—Nor was this, alas! the only cankerous speck upon the apparent prosperity of Siegendorf! a sort of secret foreknowledge, which is, in fact, only a nice calculation made by the feelings, before we permit it to become an operation of the judgment, already corroded that distinguished lot fortune seemed to have prepared for him!

The employments of the count had been hitherto so numerous, and his reflections so much engaged, as to have precluded the discharge of various duties imposed upon him by the nature of his situation. The rank he held in the state, together with the favor shown him by the imperial court, bade him hope for the highest honors either could bestow; yet, alienated as he had been from his family, it was not possible for him to know what had been its views or connections during his absence, except by an examination of his father's papers. To the memory of that father the count had not yet learned to be just. The habitual resentment he had permitted himself to cherish against him while living, had even withered those sensibilities which so often wait to ripen over the grave: and though, in returning to his native domain, Siegendorf could not wholly divest himself of local and tender recollections, the circumstances succeeding his return had blunted their force: nor had he been desirous to conceal from himself, that he re-trod, with exultation, spots whence he had, at one time, believed paternal authority for ever excluded him; and triumphed in the consciousness of having vindicated his own rights and judgment. Hours of reflection had succeeded these temporary transports; and had combined with some late observations to create a secretly agitating feeling, which impelled him to enter with the deepest interest upon the office before him:—shutting himself up, therefore, alone in his chamber, at a late hour, he prepared to fulfill it.

In reviewing either the political or military transactions of his father, the count found little interest, though some information. The party under which the former had acted was now wholly subdued; and the latter, from the early bias of his life, rather than any just mode of thinking, had ever cherished a decided preference for the Austrian cause, which the favor shown him by its leaders had considerably strengthened. Passing, therefore, rapidly forwards, he fell upon such papers as more immediately related to himself: they were of a nature to touch the most secret recesses of his soul; and never had the occurrences of his early life been presented in colors so vivid, or so touching, as in the affecting comments which solitude and affliction left his father leisure to make upon them. He pursued the examination with still increasing interest as the dates grew nearer and nearer to late events. At length he reached that which ascertained the exact period of Conrad's departure from the castle. The chain there snapped! But while the mutilated and imperfect fragments announced no reality, they left a field for conjecture respecting the conduct of the latter, at once singular and alarming. With conjecture, indeed, the count had been before too busy; but never had his imagination extended it to that fearful point which now indistinctly presented itself. A palpitation seized his heart—his head swam—his eyes were darkened: by a violent effort he again attempted to read, but all that followed was confusion and mystery. His father had survived many weeks—long enough, indeed, to convince himself that the defection of Conrad, which it was obvious he had in the first instance, considered as an insidious violation of the compact between himself and his son, had, in reality, not originated in any seduction employed by the latter. That Count Siegendorf had, in consequence of this conviction, again written to Hamburg to re-establish the correspondence and remittances there upon their former footing, was rendered sufficiently clear by many annexed memorandums. Unhappily, the dates of these second letters proved them to have been dispatched too late; they were among the last acts of his life, and reached not their destination till he for whose advantage they were intended had studiously escaped all research, and was on his way to Silesia. The remaining papers of the afflicted and venerable parent tended, therefore, only to discover a broken heart—a heart deeply lacerated by his son, and finally broken by some inexplicable misconduct on the part of Conrad. What an image to present to his eyes, who was now, in turn, become a father, and who had already learned to fear that he might not prove a happy one!

Awful were the phantoms which midnight and deep contrition united to call up before the imagination of the count: and it was at the very climax of his worldly prosperity that the specter of conscience first appeared to him. He banished it, and strove by a more regular examination of the papers to detect some error that might at least dispel a part of his inquietude. His researches were fruitless: every succeeding memorandum but proved more incontestably that the fatal billet sent to Hamburg, which consigned him to poverty—nay, in its effect, almost to madness—had been written immediately under the influence of a resentment excited in his father by the desertion of Conrad; and that he had himself consequently owed to the imprudence of the latter in quitting Bohemia the most afflicting calamity of his life.—Yet that imprudence, fatal as it proved, and sullied as it possibly had been by errors of a less venial nature, was, at worst, in itself only the pardonable consequence of filial fondness and duty! at least thus officiously argued the heart of the count.—Aye indeed! Who testified this?—Conrad! and *Conrad only!*—but his subsequent conduct had confirmed it!—How? in what instance?—He had adopted the cause of his family!—Was it not his own?—By an effort of painful and humiliating duplicity he had extricated his father from disgrace!—Could any thing but his father's personal appearance at Prague have saved him from that of illegitimacy?—He had restored the latter to his hereditary rights and honors:—not so! he had indeed assisted in giving him liberty: or rather he had lengthened his chain. He had bound him by a solemn promise, which nothing but the exigency of circumstances had induced the count to violate, to attend his own arrival at Carlsbad.—When that promise *was* violated, when Conrad *did* arrive, not at Carlsbad, indeed, but at the castle of Siegendorf, and found his father invested by the state with unlimited possession, did his countenance announce *his* share in the general joy?—Did his voice rise with the general acclamation?—Alas, no!—It was precisely at that critical moment the count had learnt to doubt. Conrad, ever meditative and silent from the first hour he had presented himself to his parents, had on the second occasion, however different the circumstances, manifested the same reserve, the same abstraction, the same haughty distrust. He neither appeared to give, nor take joy: every eye had sunk before his, and every voice had been hushed into silence. Neither his youth, the grandeur of his person, nor that luster which attends the rights of an heir, had created any exultation at his presence. Even the most indulgent of his parents had discovered that he was not beloved; and the feelings of both had secretly assigned the reason—he was not capable of loving.

But although the exterior of Conrad dazzled not the eyes of dispassionate observers, the count had now learnt to suspect that it might too successfully have misled the hearts of Josephine and himself; or rather that those tender hearts had been duped by their own sensibility, and that the agitating moment of their son's appearance at M—— had converted into an angel of light the being who shone upon them amidst such a gloom. It was even because he was not a hypocrite that he had, perhaps, best deceived them: the character of his mind accorded too well with every circumstance of time and place; and when to smile would have been to insult their feelings, was it necessary to disguise his own? Such were the reflections of Siegendorf; which, like a stream swelled by many small and invisible springs, now suddenly acquired the force of a torrent, and rushed forward with irresistible rapidity. He still held the papers in his hand; but he read them not—he saw them not. Questions which even in the bosom of misery, and during their short meetings at M——, had not escaped him, now passed in tumultuous succession through his memory. If Conrad really sought his father, why was he found wandering so far from the track that should have led to him? By what accident was a being so detestable as the Hungarian his associate? and wherefore did he bury beneath an obscure appearance his own name and condition in life? During the short and anxious meetings that preceded the count's departure from Silesia, some cruelly impending evil had ever banished those interesting subjects on which the ear of affection delights to dwell. The details of Conrad had necessarily been then concise and imperfect: there was even a sort of anticipated pleasure in permitting them to be so. The narrative of the past was suspended to enrich the future —to fill up many an evening of social and domestic intercourse with that innocent but exquisite luxury which arises to tender hearts when they interchange their history and their feelings. Those hours of leisure were now come, but they had not brought the pleasure which should have gilded them. Conrad, after the first meeting between himself and his father, had been little at the castle of Siegendorf. His manners, when there, were forbidding; his communications cold and unsatisfactory: he sought no intercourse; he desired no confidence; he delighted only, as it appeared, in such sports or exercises as withdrew him from his parents; and behind the more prominent features of his character a discerning eye might perceive some, which thrown, as it were, into dark shadow, inspired an apprehension the more acute from their very indistinctness.—Alas! was such then in reality the darling son of Siegendorf; the promised comforter of his future life; the cherished being on whom he had gazed in childhood, and so ardently desired to elevate to that point where fortune in very malice had now placed him!

That Conrad was placed in a sphere far beyond his mother's influence, Josephine was also deeply sensible; but her affliction was little tinctured with surprise. The habits of her mind, unlike those of Siegendorf, ever leading her to discriminate the sensations and opinions of others, created that nice perception of character to which he was a stranger.—By an effect, therefore, less of judgment than of feeling, she quickly understood that of Conrad; and though sensible that there might have been hearts over which hers would have possessed an influence at almost any period of life, she perceived his was not of that description. This, with many other sorrows, alike impossible to obviate, she endeavored to forget; or rather to confine to the sanctuary of her own bosom: for Josephine was no longer the creature of philosophy and solitude. Agitated incessantly by the turbulence of Siegendorf's character, yet thrown back upon herself, she had contemplated with an aching sensibility, and an observing judgment, that mass of passion, inconsistency, and suffering, by which life is disfigured. Successive conflicts had insensibly given to her own character a deeper, but a softer shade; and if it did not appear tinctured with sadness, it was because sadness itself took the color of resignation. The first fond love of a virtuous woman's heart is, nevertheless, a tenacious sentiment: hers, sanctified by every tie, had survived almost every disappointment. In ceasing, therefore, to feel with her husband, she had not ceased to feel for him; and the affections ever in some degree reward themselves, by the animating principle they create throughout the bosoms in which they are deeply felt.

Possessed as Josephine was with the belief that Siegendorf's wishes were at length amply gratified by the resumption of his patrimonial rights; that Stralenheim had withdrawn his pretensions from a conviction of their inutility; and that nothing stood between the count and all he could desire of happiness but the disposition of his mind, and a shade of displeasure towards his son, she earnestly strove to correct the one, and to palliate the bitterness of the other. Magnificence, as far as it respected her own gratification, she had never yet coveted. The first sorrow that ever assailed her had been introduced by the remote prospect of it; but she believed it necessary to the felicity of her husband, and, therefore, had rejoiced in the acquisition. It was consequently with surprise, as well as regret, that she saw its effect upon their different characters; and felt, that, while it elevated one, it depressed the other. By multiplying her sympathies, and extending her benevolence, it indeed afforded her a new spring of existence; while in him it seemed gradually to increase the apathy of a joyless and exhausted heart.

Joyless, indeed, was the heart of Siegendorf!—nor could either the splendor of art, or the beauties of nature, fill up the void. To him

> "The disenchanted earth lost all its luster."

He had himself embittered the paradise around, and found it impossible to banish ideas that were his torment. The count had quitted Bohemia in the fullness of health and vigor—every appetite and passion alike ripe for enjoyment, and impatient of restraint. Since those days of inebriation, half the circle of life had revolved, and its irresistible progress had placed him precisely in that sphere of existence his father formerly occupied. Conrad now filled his. In all, save identity of persons, they were the same;—too much resembling in the tenor, though not in the features of their characters. But life no longer presented to Siegendorf those allurements which in early youth had rendered him indifferent to the value of the affections; and, from the moment he had regained Conrad, it had, therefore, been among the most passionate wishes of his heart to be beloved by him. This wish was, however, defeated by the very first meeting between himself and his son: for Conrad, it had been evident, from that moment, neither loved nor esteemed his father: —the past, therefore, became a blank, and the future a field of anxious and fearful apprehension:—a melancholy, deep, silent, unconquerable, took possession of the mind of the count, as he continued to meditate on both: a melancholy so nearly allied to remorse, as to find food for the latter even in what appeared only the common chance of circumstances: for he insensibly began to persuade himself that it communicated its influence to every thing within his circle: nor was the observation founded on chimera, whatever the application might be. His castle no longer wore the same aspect of cheerfulness with which it had greeted him:—his native followers and retainers strangely diminished: their places were supplied by persons unknown to him, and by whom he had no appearance of being beloved. The crowds that had returned to his estates with alacrity, that had officiously sought his presence, and implored to be admitted under his protection, either fulfilled their duties with coldness, or silently abandoned them; the voice of joy was no longer heard, and industry no longer exerted itself: while even the domestic retinue past silently through the apartments of the castle, and seemed mutually to distrust each other.

The mind and constitution of Siegendorf became shaken: and such was the irritable state of his nerves, that a thousand wild, chimerical, and even superstitious fears, assailed him by turns. Was slander busy with his name? Did any secret whisper from Idenstein or the intendant remotely pursue his footsteps?—Was the Hungarian at hand to plan fresh scenes of blood? Or did the spirit of Stralenheim walk abroad, to wither the prosperity of that man who had opened the door of murder upon him?—Every method taken to trace the evil to its source, for an evil it too obviously was,—proved alike unsuccessful. Superstition did not, even on the minutest investigation, appear to have peopled the castle within; no enemy threatened the person of the count without; yet a secret and inexplicable curse seemed to hang over its walls, and the miserable Siegendorf was at length obliged to conclude that it was the malediction of a father!

Unable to control or endure these gloomy ideas, the count at length quitted his own estates, and fixed his temporary residence at Prague. He was received there by the ministers of the imperial court with a distinction eminently flattering to his public character, and which, if it afforded no real solace to his feelings, at least diminished their acuteness, and forced him upon occupations that expelled the eternal recollection of himself. He had now reached the maturity of life: and the intense thought that marked his features, insensibly impressed those around with the deference due to a superior mind. Apparently devoid of arrogance or ambition, yet rising gradually to every honor that could gratify either, he seemed to live, while yet in the world, like a man whose soul is already beyond it: and through an effect of that singular deception sometimes produced by invisible causes, those who penetrated not beyond the surface soon accustomed themselves to look upon Count Siegendorf as not only amidst the most prosperous, but the most meritorious of the favorites of fortune. All hearts but one seemed to cherish and applaud him: yet to that only one, the esteem of which he feared he had irrecoverably lost, his invariably turned, with a tenacious fondness that was fated to be his scourge.

But while sadness and desolation thus reigned within the immediate circle where the count had hoped to find joy, she appeared to have taken up her residence where desolation had indeed long prevailed. The kingdom, torn by a series of fierce and bloody contests, prepared at length to enjoy the peace for which it ardently panted. The preliminaries so long in agitation, had in the bare prospect awakened the spirit of the people; and the ratification, recently signed, communicated that transport peculiar to a suffering multitude. A day of festivity was named: solemn thanks, and every ceremony religious or civil, were appointed to attend it; and man, in recovering a blessing of which he so often voluntarily deprives himself, seemed to believe he could want no other.

The rank and indispensable duties of the count called him early from his palace: though a fluctuating state of health, and a deep depression of spirits, little disposed him to share the activity he found abroad. At sun-rise every window of the city had been decorated with flowers or streamers: frankincense from the censers perfumed the air; consecrated images were offered with devout awe from hand to hand; and processions of the various religious orders were seen passing in different directions. The attention of the multitude was, however, chiefly engaged by that of the states, which moved solemnly towards the great church, attended by the imperial and national guards, and composed of all that was most splendid or illustrious in the kingdom. Spacious as was the building, it was immediately filled. The nobles, the populace, youth—age—an immense concourse, quickly hastened in: the doors were then closed, and the hum and press of the multitude insensibly subsided to a low murmur:—that ceased!—every knee was bowed—every head was devoutly inclined downwards; while the various military bands played some of those sacred and almost divine airs which supply language to the soul when she faints under the want of it. Happy for each individual had this sentiment of devotion, so grand and impressive in the exterior, conveyed its purifying influence to the heart! That of Siegendorf was deeply moved. No word, indeed, escaped his lips: but while the long here and hereafter passed through his imagination, the silent and secret aspiration they dictated was not unheard. From the posture in which he had mechanically continued, the count was at length roused by the rush of the multitude around, and the grand burst of the Te Deum. He arose with the rest: when, casting his eye, from the elevated situation in which he stood, upon the long though distant line of human faces beneath, he suddenly fancied he saw that of the Hungarian amongst them.—A mist obscured the sight of Siegendorf, and a shock like that of electricity ran through his frame. So deep, indeed, had been the abstraction of his mind, that the revulsion of the senses was almost too mighty for his bodily strength. By a vigorous effort he recovered his powers of perception, and again eagerly looked forward. But the crowd had in the interim moved toward the gates. The sway and pressure caused every space to be immediately occupied by newcomers, nor could the most penetrating gaze ascertain the place or features of an individual!

Those turbulent passions, once so habitual in the character of the count, now impatiently strove again to burst forth. Vainly, however, did he look above, around, below, for some sympathizing bosom, some answering eye, that could at once catch and comprehend all that his would have conveyed. Encumbered with pomp and empty distinction, he found it equally impossible to quit his own rank in the procession, or summon Conrad from the distant one in which he was stationed. The train meantime continued to move on, and the count was reduced still to make a part of that pageantry to which both his senses and his soul were alike insensible. It at length reached the river. The broad expanse of the Muldau was covered with innumerable boats and vessels, which displayed their streamers to the sun, and with incessant motion dazzled the eye by their brightness and variety. On the summit of the bridge, itself a sublime and commanding spectacle, the elevated banners of the nation were seen to pass, escorted by the younger nobility; while the thunder of their music, which, with a more sprightly movement, swelled above the pitch of that sacred and imposing solemnity it had so lately assumed, was now distinctly heard, amid the trampling of the populace, and the confused shouts of a multitude who at every pause rent the air with joyful acclamation!

Siegendorf, after vainly continuing to strain his powers of sight in search of the Hungarian, rested them, at length, on the helmet of Conrad, distinguished by his superior stature among the rest; and though to exchange a single glance was beyond all force of vision, the anxious father darted his eye forward, as if by a supernatural effort he could make the perturbed feelings of his own bosom known to that of his son.

The name of *Kruitzner*, articulated precisely at this moment, in that low, deep, and deliberate tone which makes itself heard even amid general clamor, suddenly arrested the attention of the count. Without sufficient presence of mind to recollect that by recognizing the name he identified himself, Siegendorf turned hastily towards the speaker, and within the distance of a very few paces again beheld the features of the Hungarian. He was not to be mistaken. He wore the dress of his country, and fixed upon the count a glance so worldy and alarming as caused the heart of the latter to start, as it were, from its place, and involuntarily to stand upon the defensive. Siegendorf perceiving him again about to escape among the multitude, stretched out his arm to detain him: but the strong emotion of his own mind caused him at the same moment to stagger; and as the accompanying change of countenance announced an indisposition that almost approached to swooning, the action was misconstrued. The zeal of those near made them press closely around; and before his powers of recollection returned he found himself dragged, not merely from the spot, but even from all probability of regaining it. The fact, was, however, indubitable: the recognition had even been mutual: and the count saw a horrible and indefinite evil impending over his head, by the uncertain expectation of which life, and every good it could bestow, must of necessity be blasted. Of earthly goods, his honor and his estimation in society were now become the dearest; yet was it exactly those, perhaps indeed those only, of which the Hungarian might deprive him!—The unsettled but gloomy sentiment that had so long harassed the bosom of Siegendorf, uniting with the tumultuous feelings of the moment, now rose to a point of almost desperate energy. He could not fly to Josephine for solace. She was ignorant of the dark and complicated history his recollections involved. The feelings of Conrad he had but too much reason to know rarely accorded with his. It was, nevertheless, to Conrad—and to Conrad only, he could venture to communicate them! Yet even this relief was denied; for the latter, though summoned, was many hours before he appeared.

The count, meantime, solitary in the midst of his palace, grew every succeeding moment more and more a prey to the irritability of his feelings; till nothing predominated but an unextinguishable desire to appease them by assuring himself at least of the person of the Hungarian. To accomplish this, however, required, apparently, a method and deliberation to which he was little equal: he chose out, nevertheless, such of his domestics as he could best confide in; and describing with minuteness the dress and figure of the man he sought, enjoined them to make such inquiries as might at least ascertain his pursuits and his residence. Their absence was long, and their researches fruitless. The return of Conrad in the interim, earnestly as it had been desired, afforded little relief to the agitated heart of his father; who found it impossible to make him enter into the feelings by which he was himself actuated; and who even felt that he had no right to expect that he should do so. Conrad, in remaining at M——, so long after the departure of the count, had amply discharged all due to honor and to justice. It was Siegendorf alone who had shrunk from what either dictated. It was he who had deserted the defence of his own rectitude; who had left to his son a painful responsibility, for which, as it appeared, no gratitude could reward him: an odious tax of duplicity and meanness, that had evidently debased the minds of both, and created a spirit of distrust and alienation time itself seemed unable to remove. Was it then the part of Seigendorf to resent that his son could not sympathize with him? Ah! had he not much more reason to regret that he had not earlier sympathized with his son?

While the count was thus secretly tortured by feelings which retrospection and an inflamed sensibility had long since engendered, day insensibly began to close, and the events of the morning were almost driven from his thoughts by the deep and varied contemplations that engrossed them; when his domestics, in announcing the request of a stranger to see him, at once recalled the whole. The count, struck with a sudden conviction that he was on the point of receiving some tidings of the man he sought, commanded, without hesitation, that the inquirer should be admitted: the folding doors were instantly thrown open by his attendants; and, to the utter astonishment of Siegendorf, the Hungarian himself appeared at the threshold. He advanced a few steps, and then looked earnestly around, with the air of a man who receives a deep impression from the scene before him, though not exactly that of common or vulgar surprise. To him who recollected the circumstances under which the parties present had before met, those of the moment were indeed calculated to create a sensation not easily conquered.

They stood in the inner but most magnificent hall of the palace. It was of Gothic architecture, grand, spacious, and gloomy. The last rays of a western sun shot obliquely between the massy pillars, and gilded the trophies and banners of the family of Siegendorf as they were suspended around. The count himself was at the upper end. He was splendidly habited for the ceremony of the morning, and the insignia of various orders with which he had been invested sparkled at his bosom. Conrad, so lately entered, had not yet thrown aside the high military plume or the saber by which the younger nobility had been universally distinguished; and the appearance of both was in singular contrast to the simple, though characteristic garb of the Hungarian, who stood in dark shadow below.

"*It is Kruitzner*," again repeated the latter, in a tone of slow and deliberate interrogation. The count, who scorned longer to dissemble, inclined his head with a token of acquiescence. While Conrad, in astonishment at the scene, folded his arms, and, drawing near, fixed a steady gaze on the inquirer. The Hungarian again looked around, as if, satisfied at length of the identity of the persons, he was comparing what he saw with what he recollected: then advancing a few steps toward Siegendorf, with no less firmness than before, "Your people," said he, "I understand, have made inquiries concerning me:—I am here!"—

There was a simplicity both in the speech, and the manner of delivering it, that staggered the count. But he recovered his presence of mind; and, by a proud effort, strove to assume that self-possession which seemed to mark the Hungarian.

"It was by my order that you were sought," said he: "The monitor within will sufficiently explain my motive!

—You stand suspected of an atrocious crime :—Acquit yourself—or prepare to attend its consequences."

"I come to meet them :—Who are my accusers ?"—

Siegendorf hesitated.

"The general voice :—mine in particular :—the time—the place—and every probability that authorizes either internal or presumptive evidence."

"Did these attach suspicion to no other name than mine ?—Recollect well before you speak !"

"Prevaricator !" exclaimed the count, roused to his accustomed pride and fierceness by the implied accusation.—"Of all existing beings," pursued he, after an agitating pause, "you best can attest the innocence of the man you allude to.—But I hold no other conference with a murderer than that which an overwhelming sense of equity demands of me. Answer directly to my charge."

"I deny the crime altogether !"

"Upon what ground ?"

"Because I know the criminal."

"Name him !"

"He stands beside you !"—and he pointed to Conrad. —The count, who had roused his whole soul to dare the accusation in his own person, recoiled speechless and aghast. But perceiving Conrad start forward to aim a desperate vengeance at his accuser, he threw himself without hesitation between them.

"Liar and defamer !" exclaimed Siegendorf. "This," he added, turning to his son, "is indeed a calumny so monstrous, that I was not prepared for it !"—The lip of Conrad was pale : his eyes rolled with a singular expression ; and there was that in his features which struck a chord within his father's bosom that never yet had vibrated. He saw them convulsed, as they had appeared by star-light in the prince's garden at M——; and both the heart and countenance of Siegendorf for a moment fell.

"Count," said the Hungarian, who attentively scrutinized the looks of the latter, "I came hither with no light or fluctuating resolution.—Yet let me premise that I sought not this occasion; nor was it even possible for me to foresee it. When I knelt with the multitude in the great church, curiosity alone attracted me thither. By what extraordinary calculation, indeed, could I suspect that among senators and nobles I should behold the forlorn and destitute Kruitzner? By what calculation still more extraordinary could I guess that, under such circumstances, he would ever again desire to behold me?—He *has* desired it; and we have met.—Before we proceed further, answer me at once who profited by the murder of Baron Stralenheim? Was it the man, think ye, who became immediately after an outcast and a beggar? The baron, *on that occasion*, lost neither gold nor jewels; it was his life only the assassin sought; and that life was the sole bar to a rich and contested inheritance!"

"These," said the count, again fired by interrogations which he felt to be equally fallacious and inconclusive, "are surmises that attach no less to myself than to my son."

"Be it so!—Let the issue light on him amongst us whose soul secretly acknowledges the guilt! It is to you only, Count Siegendorf, I now speak. You are my accuser and self-created judge. Beware, therefore, how you incur the penalty of collusive guilt!—I have submitted voluntarily to your tribunal; and, remember, I demand justice from you, as you expect it either here or hereafter!—My narrative," continued he, perceiving the count had no words to interrupt him, "will be long: it will include a period to the events of which you are probably a stranger, and an accusation no less deadly to your peace than that you have already heard. *Dare* you protect me?—*Dare* you enjoin me to proceed?"

Siegendorf would have spoken, but his lips refused their office. He once more motioned with his head however in acquiescence; yet was there something savage and alarming in the tone of the Hungarian, at which his soul indignantly though apprehensively, revolted. Conrad, whom it seemed to have roused, awakened to curiosity by the whole of this extraordinary exordium, leaned with an undaunted and contemptuous air against the pillar near which he stood. He had detached his saber from his side and occupied himself in forming fantastic lines with it on the marble below. Now and then he half unsheathed it, and seemed curiously to examine its polish.

"I am unarmed, count," said the Hungarian, who kept a watchful and steady eye upon him:—"Command your son to lay aside his weapon."—Conrad smiled disdainfully, and, returning the saber to its scabbard, threw it some paces from him.

"Proceed safely," said he: "the tale will, no doubt, be worthy of the relater:—but is it worthy of my father to listen to it?"

The count, who had recovered from the first shock of an over-anxious mind, and more deliberately weighed the dark and suspicious character of the man before him, penetrated by this indirect reproach, extended his hand fondly towards his son in token of unshaken confidence and love. The brow of the Hungarian changed: it seemed to be among his peculiar characteristics to analyze exactly every transition of sentiment in the bosoms of those around him: and by an instantaneous impression he felt that he stood on different ground both with father and son from that he had occupied a few moments before. His own purpose seemed shaken, and he paused for a considerable time before he proceeded further.

"It will be unnecessary," said he at length, "to enter into any detail that respects only myself.—I was thrown early upon the world, and am what it has made me!—Circumstances induced me to spend the winter that preceded your arrival at M—— at Frankfort on the Oder. I lived obscurely; but I occasionally frequented the coffee-houses and other public meetings, and I generally, therefore, knew something of what was passing in the city. Towards the middle of the month of February a singular occurrence engaged attention, and formed the common topic of discourse there. A military party had secured, upon the borders of Lusatia, a desperate band of men who were conjectured to be marauders from the Austrian camps. It proved otherwise, however; for further investigation left little room to doubt that they were part of a wanton and lawless banditti which infested the forests of Bohemia, and whom either accident, or savage audacity, had carried beyond their accustomed haunts. Some among them were reported to be of distinguished rank, and military vengeance had been, therefore, suspended: they were escorted through different out-posts, and placed, at length, within the jurisdiction of the civil magistrates at Frankfort.—Of *their* fate I know nothing!"—Siegendorf breathed, but it was only to be doubly roused by what followed.—"The curiosity it had excited seemed suddenly to die away, or to be authoritatively silenced; and there was only a certain limit within which rumor still dared to whisper tidings concerning it, or rather to condense all in the wonderful report she gave of one man amongst them. His birth and fortune were said to be princely: miraculous stories were related both of his natural and acquired advantages: his person was exaggerated to something superhuman both as to strength and to beauty; his prowess was deemed unrivaled; and his influence, not only over his associates, but even with those who should have been his judges, was represented to be almost that of witchcraft. I had no faith in the influence of any advantage where the latter were concerned, but that of wealth; and I, therefore, concluded he was rich. My curiosity, as well as some other feelings, was excited; and I made it my employment to seek out this extraordinary and mysterious being. Such, however, was the awe he inspired through the protection afforded him by the police, that though I suspected many within my circle of knowing his person, none dared to identify it to me. I was left to the burnings of my own impatience, when by accident, and in the public square, I encountered your son. It was a popular affray that drew us together, but it happened to be one of those singular occasions when the human mind breaks loose from the fetters of habit and society, and betrays its character upon the countenance.—My eye no sooner fell upon his, than I said to myself, 'this is the man!' He was then, as since, with the nobles of the city: but I, nevertheless, felt that I was not mistaken. I watched him long and closely: I compared what I had been told with what I then observed. I examined his person, his gesture, the varying expression of his features; I noted down in my memory all those minute characteristics which pass unobserved by common perception; and amid every natural or acquired distinction, I believed I discerned the feelings of a gladiator and the eye of an assassin."

Siegendorf, who had "drank poisons" as the Hungarian continued to speak, started from his seat at the concluding sentence with a desperation almost approaching to frenzy.—Not so Conrad! who, collected within himself, motioned to his father to be silent: and, turning full towards the Hungarian, prepared with steady, but intense curiosity, to hear the rest.

"I now believed I had found the sort of man I had long sought; and having, by indefatigable perseverance at length gained circumstantial information on this point, I waited my opportunity, and introduced myself to his notice. It was not difficult," added he, with a malicious smile, "to perceive that my attentions were undesired, but I was not to be repelled: the more he strove to disencumber himself of me, the more I felt persuaded of the truth of my own calculations. It was upon men like him that I had seen the less lucky or less daring of their fellow-beings fated to depend; and I felt an ill-founded assurance, as it afterwards proved, that I had discovered my point of fortune.—The nameless and inexplicable shadow that thus haunted the footsteps of your son, soon became, as I believed it would do, a scourge and an oppression to him: but I grew at length familiar to his eye, and he seemed to understand my meaning. He was on the point of secretly withdrawing from Frankfort. I discovered this: our intercourse increased: my hopes increased with it: and though I could not fathom the motives of his irregular conduct, I learned enough from his habits and education to doubt my own sagacity with regard to his real condition in life. Be that what it might, it was such as could not but be advantageous to mine: and acting under this conviction, I made myself, less I must confess by his choice than sufferance, the companion of his journey to Silesia. You are no stranger, count, to the event that rendered us mutually serviceable to Baron Stralenheim on the banks of the Oder; nor to the indiscreet gratitude of the latter, through which we became inmates of the prince's house at M——. How extraordinary! how memorable to all were the scenes that passed there!"

The Hungarian made a solemn pause; as if revolving within himself the manner in which he should proceed. Conrad, with stern, but almost breathless impatience, seemed to attend the result: while Siegendorf, who in the frightful history of what passed at Frankfort perceived an alarming connection with the hints afforded by his father's papers, had hardly vigor enough left to rouse himself to the last deciding testimony:—yet his heart beat fondly towards his son, and revolted from a being who, despicable even by his own confession, was stained with every evidence of circumstantial guilt.

"Your story is excellent," said Conrad, at length. "Proceed!"

"It will improve," replied the Hungarian, bitterly.—"Miserable young man! You do not yet then see—you do not even yet then conjecture, the invisible eye that was open upon your actions?—I was your dupe, indeed, at M——, for I began at length to believe you my friend.—You introduced me to your father: he was insignificant—miserable—degraded!—soiled with all the exterior debasements of poverty: but I was not so new to life as not to see in him an extraordinary man. Through your means, or his, I became the victim of a disgraceful calumny!—Woe to the worthless heart that inflicts on another the penalty of its own crimes!—Most heavily will yours rebound upon you both!"—As if roused by the acute recollection of personal indignity, the Hungarian poured out this denunciation in a tone so forcible as struck to the inmost souls of his hearers.—"Such," continued he, after a momentary pause, "was the apparent disparity of circumstances between Kruitzner and yourself, as left it impossible for me to guess the nature of your connection with him; but I quickly perceived there was some. I weighed—I calculated—I conjectured!—I knew too well the ground I stood upon with you to suspect you of real kindness or generosity: wherefore, then, did you protect me from Stralenheim and the intendant? Some unfathomable project—some dear and high-wrought interest was at stake: but it was evidently one in which I was to have no share. I quitted the house to give you leisure to construct it. I returned to mark its progress. The momentary prattle of a baby gave me to understand that his father had once been concealed in the chamber where I slept.—The secret, then, lay *there!*—Do you start?" said he to Conrad, who did indeed betray some emotion: "Now mark the end! —I returned to your father—obviously a most unwelcome guest; though I was yet at a loss to conjecture wherefore. I met you on my way, and you urged me to remain under his roof another night. My soul half acquitted you of a share in the mystery upon this evidence of apparent frankness. I was yet to learn that you were the very master-demon, and moving spring of all; and that while you courted, it was for the purpose of plunging me into perdition.—Midnight came: I arose, and, minutely examining my chamber, found I had divined the truth. My course of life had made me acquainted with the courts of princes, and the mysteries of their intrigues. Pressing the spring of the secret door, I found myself in the gallery adjoining to it. Recollection of the baron's losses, and the poverty of Kruitzner, then directed all my suspicions towards him; and I was credulous enough to acquit you. I had no light; but an irresistible curiosity impelled me forwards. Suddenly I heard a noise: it resembled a groan; low-murmured, but distinct. I stopped—listened—turned every way to ascertain whence the sound issued:—but it was not repeated. In the attitude of listening I lost my recollection, and knew not whether I had advanced or was retreating: yet my hand touched the panel of a door, and it was necessary to examine whither it led. My risk was, however, evident. I drew back, therefore, only as much of the partition as formed a crevice; but my hair stood erect on my head, and my blood froze in my veins, when through it I saw the body of Stralenheim!"

"But you saw not the murderer!" exclaimed the count, in a tone of supernatural vehemence.

"He was not, at that moment, in the room; but the locks of the baron's apartment had been changed chiefly under his inspection the day before, and he had doubtless possessed himself of a master-key; for the door of the ante-room was ajar. I saw a man bathing his hands in water: their color bore horrible testimony against him: at intervals he raised his head, and looked anxiously towards Stralenheim:—a lamp stood on the table close by, and its pale but steady light then showed me distinctly the features of your son.—Have I said enough?" continued he, directing a penetrating glance towards Conrad; "or does a father's eye and heart want further confirmation?—Yet hear me to the end," he added, abruptly arresting the attention of both, which he perceived was on the point of utterly failing. "Something, Count Siegendorf, is yet due to you!—you, who, in the first tumult and agitation of my soul, I doubted not to be an accomplice in the crime.—I saw myself at once its victim. I saw at once why I had been by him persuaded to return; and I concluded that I had been purposely stationed by you in the suspicious chamber. For a moment I hesitated upon my conduct; but I was unarmed, and no match at any time for your son in personal address or strength. He, too, had rendered himself the trusted friend of the baron; I, at the best, had entered his chamber by subtlety and stealth.—It would be impossible to describe the feelings with which I returned to my own. Josephine and her babe were yet within my power. I provided myself with the dagger which I wore commonly at my girdle; and had Kruitzner, by being absent, confirmed my suspicions, I know not what the bloody vengeance and despair that then possessed my soul would have dictated. But when I passed through his chamber, and saw the watch-light dimly burning, while the family group was buried in a tranquil slumber, I exclaimed to myself—'Peace be with you, miserable innocents!—ye know not what the morning will awaken you to!'

"Self-preservation now called loudly upon me; and hurrying from scenes in which I should infallibly have fallen a sacrifice, I concealed myself in the hollows of the mountains of Bohemia. I there learnt enough to ascertain that all power was in the hands of the murderer: and though by some act of, to me, inscrutable foresight, Kruitzner and his family had, indeed, escaped every thing but infamy, I could gain no further tidings concerning them. I concluded, therefore, that they had buried both their miseries and their poverty in some far distant country. Their sufferings, and my own experience, sufficiently warned me of the merciless character of the man we had to do with; and I finally withdrew from the neighborhood. I lost sight of him altogether. *Him*, indeed, I never more desired to see:—yet my eye sometimes explored the habitations of famine and penury in search of Kruitzner. What, then, were my emotions, when I lifted it suddenly upon him in the person of Count Siegendorf!—what my conclusions, when a more minute inquiry gave me to understand the relation between him and Baron Stralenheim! Yet my soul acquits *you*, count, of the crime.—Guilt sleeps not as you did, the night on which it was committed; and it is upon the faith of that acquittal I ventured hither.—You now know the extent of the secret I am possessed of!—*Consider its value well before you dismiss me.*"

Seigendorf, to whose jarred and perturbed faculties the latter part of the Hungarian's discourse had been nearly lost, started with confused recollections when the voice ceased to sound in his ear. Alas! of what importance to the count did his own guilt or innocence appear!—Conrad a savage and a murderer!—Conrad, his soul fraught with horrors, and his hands dipped in blood, had been the only distinct image that for a time swam before the eyes of the suffering father!—Suspicion or acquittal—wealth—honors—life itself, with all its various and fluctuating scenes, had given place to this horrible one. Absorbed in the contemplation of it, the count had, for a considerable period, lost all sense of identity, all power of judging or comparing. He was like a man in whom little more than animal life remains, but who starts at intervals under the lash of torture, and awakens to a frightful consciousness, from which he again willingly relapses to stupefaction.

From this state of mental inanity he was unexpectedly roused by the concluding address of the Hungarian. The few words in which it was couched presented a hope that seemed in itself the renovation of existence. If the accuser of Conrad were thus venal, Conrad himself was, doubtless, innocent!—Plausible as was the tale, circumstantially as it had been related, and deep as was its impression, it rested at last on the testimony but of one man; and that one among the most worthless of his species. Leaving behind every adventitious circumstance calculated to confirm his fears, the count passed with the rapidity of lightning to all that could dissipate them. The first hateful impression he had conceived of the Hungarian—the subsequent dissimulation of the latter—the implied baseness of his past life, the avowed meanness of his present, were all so many evidences against him. The last sordid appeal was in itself conclusive! He who was to be bought was surely not to be believed!—Believed, too, against whom?—a darling, an almost adored son, who, had he been even guilty, the miserable count felt too closely entwined with every fiber of his heart to be torn from it without agony.

Siegendorf, with that vehemence of feeling which sees no medium between desperation and security, at once clung to the latter. Yet while thus, by a violent effort repelling the worst of his fears, a numerous train, sufficiently alarming, though subordinate, started up to supply their place. In proportion to the villainy of the Hungarian, the magnitude of those evils which surrounded the future fate of Conrad and himself would inevitably increase!—Both were in the power of an incendiary, who could torture if he could not crush;—who might so speciously blend truth and falsehood as to defeat the clearest judgment, and the most impartial heart;—who beheld, for the first time, in the splendid fortunes of the family of Siegendorf, an allurement to plunder of which he had hitherto been ignorant; and who, like the beast that scents blood, would, too probably, be satisfied only when he has glutted. The imagination of the count, now directed from that fearful image which had before swallowed up all the faculties of his soul, saw, in the clearest and most extended point of view, how much was to be considered—how much to be guarded against! He threw an anxious and inquiring gaze on Conrad; but the latter, buried, as it appeared, in a resentful and proud silence at the hitherto tame acquiescence of his father, seemed willing to leave every thing to the hazard of the moment. Only now and then he measured the Hungarian with his eyes, as an enemy too daring not to excite astonishment. The extraordinary pause that had succeeded the narrative of the latter was, at length, interrupted by himself.—

"Is it vengeance, count, or justice, on which you meditate so deeply," said he, with some surprise.

"Neither," returned Siegendorf. "I am weighing," he added, emphatically, "the *nature* and the *value* of your communication."

"The first needs no comment!—I will speak to the last with the same frankness I have hitherto used. My life is a life of hardship and necessity—it is in your power to make it otherwise!—You are affluent, and rank high in the state."

"I understand you."

"Not wholly, if I judge by your countenance. You believe me venal, and are not quite convinced I am sincere. It is nevertheless true that circumstances have rendered me both.—Again I repeat—Consider well before you answer me!"

"Dare you attend the event of my deliberation?"

The Hungarian hesitated, and cast his eyes distrustfully on Conrad, who was walking to and fro between the pillars. The latter raised his in return; but, disdainfully withdrawing them again, passed on in silence.

"I pledge my life—my honor—my salvation for your safety within my walls," exclaimed the impatient count.

"I have yet an additional security," replied the Hungarian, after a moment's meditation. "I did not enter Prague a solitary individual: and there are tongues without that will speak for me, although I should even share the fate of Stralenheim!—Let your deliberation, count, be short," he added, again glancing towards Conrad: "and be the future at your peril no less than mine!—Where shall I remain?"

Siegendorf opened a door that admitted to one turret of the castle, of which he knew all other egress was barred: the Hungarian started, and his presence of mind evidently failed him. He looked around with the air of a man who is conscious that, relying on a sanguine hope, he has ventured too far, and neither knows how to stand his ground nor to recede; Yet he read truth and security in the countenance of Siegendorf, although not unmingled with contempt. By an excessive effort of dissimulation he, therefore, apparently recovered his equanimity, and made a step towards the spot pointed out to him.

"My promise is solemn—sacred—irrevocable," said Siegendorf, seeing him pause again upon the threshold: "It extends not, however, beyond my own walls."

"I accept the conditions," replied the other.—His eye, while speaking, fell on the saber of Conrad; and the count, who perceived it did so, invited him by a look to possess himself of it: he then closed the door of the turret upon him, and advanced hastily towards his son, who, with folded arms, stood buried in deep meditation.

"You have done well," said the latter, raising his head at the near approach of his father, "to listen to this man's story.—The evil we can not measure, we can not guard against:—but it would be fruitless to temporize further—He must be silenced more effectually!"—The count started.—"With you," pursued Conrad, drawing nearer and dropping his voice, "it would be unwise longer to dissemble—His *narration is true.*—Are you so credulous as never to have guessed this?" added he, on perceiving the speechless agony of his father—"or so weak as to tremble at the acknowledgment? Could it escape you, that, at the hour we met in the garden at M——, nothing short of a discovery during the very act could have made the death of Baron Stralenheim known to any but him who caused it?—Did it appear probable," continued he, with the tone of a man who is secretly roused to fury by a consciousness of the horror he inspires, "that if the prince's household had really been alarmed, the care of summoning the police should devolve on one who hardly knew an avenue of the town? Or was it credible that such a one should, unsuspected, have loitered on the way? Least of all, could it be even possible that Kruitzner, already marked out, and watched, could have escaped unpursued, had he not had many hours the start of suspicion! I sounded—I fathomed your soul both before and at the moment: I doubted whether it was feeble or artificial: I discovered it to be the former, or I should have trusted you.—Yet such has been the excess of your apparent credulity, that I have ever at intervals disbelieved its existence!"

"Monster!" exclaimed Siegendorf, frantic with emotion, "what action of my life, what sentiment of my soul ever authorized you to suspect that I would abet a deed thus atrocious?"

"Father, father," interrupted Conrad abruptly, and his form seemed to dilate before the astonished eyes of the count, "beware how you rouse a devil between us that neither may be able to control!—We are in no temper nor season for domestic dissension. Do you suppose that while your soul has been convulsed, mine has been unmoved? or that I have really listened to this man's story with indifference?—I too can feel for myself:—for what being besides did your example ever teach me to feel?—Listen to me!" he added, silencing the count with a savage and alarming tone:—"If your present condemnation of me be just, I have listened to you at least once too often!—Remember *who* told me, when at M——, that there were crimes rendered venial by the occasion: *who* painted the excesses of passion as the trespasses of humanity: *who* held the balance suspended before my eyes between the goods of fortune and those of honor: *who* aided the mischief-stirring spirit within me, by showing me a specious probity, secured only by an infirmity of nerves. Had not your own conduct, by stamping you with disgrace, and your son with illegitimacy, deprived me of all power openly to defy Stralenheim, and were you so little skilled in human nature as not to know that the man who is at once intemperate and feeble sanctions the crimes he does not commit? Was it wonderful then that *I* should dare to act what *you* dared to meditate?—I have nothing now to do with its guilt or its innocence. It is our mutual interest to avert its consequences. We stood on a precipice down which one of three must inevitably have plunged: for I knew my own situation with the state to be as critical as yours.—I therefore precipitated Stralenheim!—*You* held the torch!—*You* pointed out the path!—Show me now that of safety; or let me show it you!"

Siegendorf, passed all power of replying, motioned to his son to leave him. But although the unhappy count spoke not, that active faculty which, defying time, space, debility, and every thing but death, combines, arranges, and tortures at the same moment, was busy within. The extravagance of his indiscretion, the excess indeed of his credulity, the blindness of his self-love, all seemed at once to rise in terrible array before him. Ever palliating, or fiercely vindicating his own errors,—ever shutting his eyes on the griefs or the temptations to which alternately they exposed others,—he perceived too late the multiplied calamities created by such a character, and the maze of inextricable misery in which it had involved himself.

"Let us have done with retrospection," said Conrad, lowering his tone, as not wholly insensible to the effect his words had produced on his father: "We have nothing more either to learn or to conceal from each other.—I have courage, and partisans who dare every thing. They are even within the walls, though you do not know them!"—Siegendorf shuddered. Alas! these then had been the substitutes for those affectionate and innocent hearts whose welcome had rendered his return to his native domain, in the first instance, so delightful!—these were the baleful spirits before whose influence virtue and industry alike had withered!

"You are favored by the state," pursued Conrad, "and it will, therefore, take little cognizance of what passes within your jurisdiction: it is for me to guard against distrust beyond it. Preserve an unchanged countenance. Keep but your own secret," he added, glancing emphatically towards the turret; "and without your further interference I will for ever secure you from the indiscretion of a third person."—So saying he left the hall.

Siegendorf, wise too late for happiness, yet felt the necessity of living yet a little longer to honor. Solemnly and sacredly had he pledged his for the safety of the Hungarian: yet he could no longer doubt but the bloody purpose of his son was to destroy him. Nor was this difficult: Conrad, as well as his father, was furnished with keys that would afford an immediate access to the opposite side of the turret: and circumstanced as the count now found himself even within his own palace walls, no certainty remained of saving the Hungarian but that of instantly liberating him. Siegendorf, actuated by an impulse of honorable desperation, not wholly unmingled, however, with an indistinct hope of silencing the accuser, hastily therefore tore the jewels from his bosom and hat, and mounted the steps. The danger that could thus alarm *him* was manifestly too imminent, the prize he offered too valuable, to leave the Hungarian room for hesitation. The few but gloomy moments the latter had already passed in solitude afforded him leisure to weigh all the hazards of an enterprise from which, in the temporary exultation of sudden hope and astonishment created at sight of Siegendorf, he had promised himself every thing. The acuteness of his penetration had indeed enabled him to calculate very accurately the character of the count in some particulars; but the excess of paternal fondness had not been included in that calculation; and he saw with surprise its operation upon his judgment. He began even to suspect that it might in the end prove powerful enough to make him abet what his genuine feelings revolted from, and render him an instrument in the hands of his son to perpetrate that vengeance he had himself thus rashly put within the reach of either.—Under these circumstances the count's admonition to escape was too perfect a demonstration of the necessity for doing so not to be immediately complied with. The mind of the latter was wrought to a pitch that allowed him not sufficient recollection to enter either into compromise or engagement. Blood alone was before his eyes; and from blood only he desired to avert them, though at the expense of every future good in life.

The unhappy Siegendorf was found by his attendants, not long after the departure of the Hungarian, alone in the turret; stripped of his jewels, speechless and insensible. As it was not doubted but the stranger had plundered him, a strict search was immediately instituted after the latter. It proved vain: for the Hungarian, satisfied with his spoils, or suspecting that by an unwary acceptance of the jewels he had fallen into a snare purposely laid for him, was heard of no more. It was not true, however, that he had either injured or attacked the count, whose frame had in reality sunk under the struggle of a violent convulsion; but Siegendorf was at no pains to confute an opinion, the probability of which spared him all further explanation: and Conrad, who alone surmised its fallacy, had, on discovering the flight of the Hungarian, immediately quitted the castle.

The internal anguish of Siegendorf, his smothered groans, his deep despair, together with the extraordinary absence of his son, quickly betrayed to Josephine the source, though not the extent, of their mutual calamity. For the count, happily as far as respected her, had learned to control his words: or rather the gloomy despondency with which he was oppressed, incapable of relief, bade him abhor all sympathy. But the grief that thus struck inward soon announced itself to be mortal: his exterior visibly changed under the conflict; his eyes sunk; his countenance became hollow: the never-dying worm seemed to have seized upon his heart. With health vanished the pleasures of sense, and with peace those of intellect. The voice of his wife was no longer music to his ear; and the sacred hope it yet strove to cherish was lost to him. His bosom, like a sullied mirror reflecting every image with its own stains, saw even in the form of the blooming Marcellin only the germ of depravity!

It was otherwise with the deeply afflicted but still magnanimous mother: she felt the reality of unblemished rectitude in her own heart, and looked forward therefore with heroic confidence to the probability of its being perpetuated in that of her infant son. Her imagination showed Marcellin imbued with qualities capable of rendering him an instrument in the hands of a beneficent God, to correct the vices, or alleviate the miseries, of his fellow-creatures. She expected not indeed that, whatever his claims, he would find the world a state of elysium. She felt that, in his progress through it, he must often sympathize with the unwise, and suffer from the unworthy: but she knew how to calculate his resources as well as his trials in this life; and cherished that pious confidence in another, which alone enables the scale of happiness to preponderate.

Whether Conrad and his father ever met again, the spirits that have long since plunged into eternity alone can tell:—on this side of it they saw each other no more. A considerable period elapsed without realizing the hopes or fears of the count. Continuing during that time to meditate on the character of his son, it seemed like some hideous shadow, to grow blacker and more gigantic as he gazed at it. Having combined every particular related by the Hungarian with those his father's papers had confusedly announced, and his own observation more perfectly assured him of, they formed a whole, alike frightful to his imagination and repulsive to his heart. Still linked, however, to this savage by the mysterious tie of nature, by the indissoluble regulations of society, by the no less forcible though less tender bonds of family interest and honor, all of life that yet lingered in the pulses of Siegendorf seemed to draw its nourishment from endless inquiries or conjectures respecting the fate of his son. They had hitherto proved fruitless, when his duty as a senator suddenly made that terrible demand upon his fortitude which the heart of the miserable father had already deprecated. A strong military force, acting under the orders of the state, was deputed to extirpate a licentious troop of borderers that harassed the country on the side next Franconia. The count, ere the fatal mandate was signed by himself, made every possible effort, even of the most dangerous kind, to ascertain their number and their leaders:—unhappily he learned both too late:—Conrad, whose savage and ferocious pleasures had led him again to join his former associates, had been cut down in a skirmish, together with many others, amidst the recesses of the forest, by the saber of an Austrian hussar. He fell indeed undistinguished: but living or dead there was no form like his, and it was recognized, as soon as seen, by the commanding officer.

The final blow was at length struck, and Siegendorf touched the extreme point alike of suffering and of existence. A rapid decay had already enfeebled a frame that seemed formed for duration. In proportion as his passions had once been stormy, so had they now sunk into profound stillness. Nor had his constitution vigor to cherish their habitual irritability: the arrow had gone deep into his heart, and the mortified wound ceased to be painful. Consideration for the rank of Conrad, as well as for the affliction of his family, induced the state to consign the trespasses of the former to oblivion: it was, therefore, permitted that he should be privately interred. The grave of his grandfather was opened, and the count, despite of all remonstrance, attended in person to see the hitherto discordant ashes finally blended. After contemplating the scene with the gaze of one who strives to look through it into eternity, he seemed to feel that all was painfully expiated, and was conveyed from the spot—never more to revisit it while vital consciousness remained.

The disposition of Siegendorf's worldly fortune secured his wife and Marcellin those honors to which the past life of the one, and the succeeding career of the other, well entitled them. But never did wealth or honors efface from the memory of Josephine the husband of her heart—its first fond choice—the dear and invariable object of all those tender illusions which sanctified the period of youth and love! The emaciated form which hardly any other eye could recognize, became, even when laid in dust, most precious to her recollection! The lowest whisper of a voice inaudible to every other ear was yet distinct to hers, as long as breath and pulsation allowed it to articulate a sound. Breath and pulsation at length failed: the tranquilized spirit of Siegendorf was exhaled upon the bosom of his better angel: and though sent too late to teach him how to live, she succeeded in preparing him to die.

The count expired in the forty-eighth year of his age, and amidst the plenitude of all those enjoyments in which he had once sought felicity: yet, through a singular chance, doubtless aided by afflicting recollections, precisely six-and-twenty years from the day on which he first quitted Bohemia. He was buried in the same vault with his father and Conrad.—If the measure of his misfortunes should appear to exceed that of his errors, let it be remembered how easily both might have been avoided: since an adherence to his duties at almost any one period of his life would have spared him more than half its sufferings.

THE SCOTSMAN'S TALE.

CLAUDINE.

> So shall I court thy dearest truth,
>   When beauty can no more engage:
> So, thinking of thy charming youth,
>   I'll love it o'er again in age.
>
> PRIOR.

A MAN may travel a good many miles without meeting with an adventure. Nay, if he be a man of business, the chances are ten to one that he may never meet with such a thing at all; except, indeed, it be a bankruptcy or a broken bone. The latter was near falling to my lot as I was traveling at my ease at the pleasant pace of about three miles an hour, in a commodious carriage composed, I apprehend, of a certain number of planks clumsily put together by some clumsy joiner, and supported by two crazy wheels. This post-wagon, as it was termed, drawn by horses, one of which was blind and the other lame, seemed, at the rate we drove, to require some ingenuity to overset it. That business, however, was accomplished. I was picked up in no condition to thank my benefactors, as the blood flowed plentifully from a wound in my head, which, though it did not dispossess my brains, threw them at least into such a state of disorder as required some hours of repose to set them right. There are, indeed, certain of my acquaintance who affirm that they never have been right from that time: but these are mere calumniators. My disorder since has lain in my heart; and is, therefore, of a nature which only the infected can judge of.

The moment I thoroughly recovered my senses I began to reconnoiter my situation. It was no bad one for a man who had been jumbled in such a conveyance as that I had quitted, could the exchange have been effected with less hazard to my bones. I found myself in a neat bed, furnished with white curtains. It is to be observed that I always had a particular predilection for white curtains; especially in foreign countries, for reasons unnecessary to detail. My chief attendant was a respectable, middle-aged woman, who seemed most kindly officious in assisting my recovery:—but truth must be told; my gratitude was not sufficiently just to direct itself principally to her, for I saw at different times several other females pass and repass my chamber, some of whom were almost children, and the eldest of them not apparently above eighteen. They were all slight, blooming, and generally distinguished by the bright, polished skin and fair locks, approaching the golden, by which the lasses of the northern hemisphere are mostly to be known.

As a Scotsman I ought to have admired this complexion beyond all others; but Scotsmen can sometimes be perverse: nay, though I know that the contrary has been maliciously asserted, they can even fail to be national. Among these pretty girls there was one then who appeared to me no less remarkable for the superiority of her charms than for the different character of her countenance. She had dark eyes, and curls of shining black hair fell almost into them over her forehead; while the longer locks were twisted up in a sort of tress infinitely graceful.

Her features, I am told, were not altogether perfect: but for my life I never could get further in the scrutiny than her eyes: yet they were ungrateful eyes, too! for they rarely, indeed hardly ever, would meet mine. But when they did—Oh then—

> "The large black orbs, filled with a sprightly light,
> Shot forth a lively and illustrious night!" * ———

From being over head and ears in the mire I was almost as quickly over head and ears in love. Yet not wholly with a face either: for my fair Swede, who by the bye turned out to be no Swede at all, spoke French; so luckily did I: and during the days of my convalescence the hospitable family, without distrust or guile, gave me frequent opportunities to snatch conversation with any of the young women by turns. I must have been a monster had I abused the confidence shown me. Not I mean by any decided act of libertinism; for I found them sufficiently well educated and decorous in their habits to put that out of the question; but even by sullying the genuine purity of their minds with gross flattery or worldly address. My eyes and my heart, nevertheless, turned towards Claudine with that decided preference which makes itself alike understood either in simple or sophisticated life.

Thus agreeably circumstanced, I took care not to recover from the effects of my accident too hastily: nay, it is not at all clear to me when that recovery would have been perfected, had not an anxious letter from my father, who was equally alarmed for the health of his son and for some particular commercial concerns, roused me from my dream of idleness and felicity. I well knew, in fact, that I had no business in Sweden at all. I had been sent to St. Petersburg on an affair of consequence to my family,

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* Cowley.

and nothing but the levity and busy curiosity of two-and-twenty had led me out of my way, to explore copper-mines and herbalise upon mountains.

The man who turns from his road at all, stands a chance of going much further than he calculates: such was my case in every particular; and how to get into it again, in truth, I hardly knew. My letters had been forwarded to me from Russia: should I say I had remained there, or should I acknowledge my wanderings? I chose to dissemble, and experience showed me I chose wrong. I sent to my correspondent at St. Petersburg such letters as I wished transmitted to England: I enjoined him faithfully to conceal my real abode, and I prepared to stay awhile longer with my host and his charming family. To this arrangement, however, I had, as it appeared, nobody's consent but my own: for the good man, who was a Lutheran priest,—frank, well-instructed, and a more strict observer than I supposed him to be of the characters and feelings of those around,—no sooner discovered, by my dispatching letters to St. Petersburg, that I did not intend yet to go thither, than the tone of my reception entirely changed. I shut my eyes, nevertheless, to this for several days, at the expiration of which time my host invited me to walk after breakfast with him one morning in his garden. I had a disagreeable presentiment of what was to be the subject of our conversation, and I would, therefore, very willingly have declined it; but the thing was impossible.

It was a fine sunshiny day. Nothing could be more delightful than the scene. A balmy air just stirred the leaves of the flowers that were distributed around us; and the dew, not being yet exhaled, caused them to send forth that pure and exquisite fragrance which seems the immediate breath of heaven. The cottage of the pastor was situated in a wild and almost savage country, the rough features of which, softening as they approached, presented within its immediate precincts an image of tranquillity every thing seemed to realize. The sea, like a broad blue belt, skirted the distances; and a good eye might even occasionally catch the outline of the larger vessels as they steered through the Gulf of Bothnia.

With all this flowery description, however, which my recollection has since obtruded upon me, nobody could be further from relishing the beauties of nature than I was at that moment; at least such as then presented themselves to my eyes. To hear me, nevertheless, you would have concluded me an enthusiast. It was impossible to speak more fluently, or with more eloquence than I did upon them: I remember I was particularly inspired upon the subject of bees, of which my host had a large provision in his hives; and it was true that their soft, but busy murmur, really contributed in no small degree to the species of rustic voluptuousness his garden otherwise afforded. I was even entering into an exact inquiry concerning their domestic economy and regulations, when my companion interrupted me.

"My good young Englishman, " said he,—which, by the bye, was a misnomer, for I was a North Briton,—"I perceive you are very ingenious in evading the question on which I wished to speak with you. But with your leave, I must be permitted to intrude it. It is evident that you are not disposed to quit us; and I may tell you, without flattery, that I shall be no less sorry on my side to part with you. There is something of simplicity and nature in your character that pleases me. Unhappily, indeed, it is too natural; for you have stumbled upon an old-fashioned error which the combinations of society have almost exploded. You are fallen in love, as it is termed: that is, you have seen a pretty girl for whom you have a tender preference, and who indeed justifies it, as I believe her mind to be no less innocent and charming than her person. But have you considered what you are about? You are apparently a very young man,—dependent, if I understand you rightly, on your father: your country is at war with that of Claudine; and, were it even otherwise, it is extremely improbable that your parents should sanction your attachment to a young French emigrée who has neither family nor establishment on which she can rely. I know the English are a generous nation: but I also know human nature to be, under various modifications, the same every where; and I can not, therefore, be of opinion that your choice will obtain the sanction of your friends."

The discourse of the good man opened a new light upon me. I spoke French fluently it must be owned; so too did all his family; but I had a true British accent, and my ear had not been nice enough, or my eyes had monopolized the power of my other senses, to discover that Claudine was a native French woman. To my worthy friend's harangue I could only observe in answer, "That young men seldom did consider what they were about when they fell in love, or they would possibly never do so at all. That I had, besides, been taken at an unfair advantage, since my senses were not my own at the time; and that I verily believed they never would be so again, unless I were happy enough to possess Claudine. That he was perfectly right with regard to my dependence on my father; but that I was blest with the most affectionate parents in the world, who would not, I was persuaded, be tempted by any consideration to destroy the happiness of their son; and that, with respect to my future steps, it had been my intention maturely to consider before I ventured upon them."

I did not pronounce the latter part of my discourse so emphatically, or with half so good a grace as the first:

for my conscience told me that, to say the very best of it, it was but half true. Not, certainly, that I suspected my parents of being willing to destroy my happiness; but till fathers and sons agree more exactly in what happiness consists, I am afraid the expression will always be a little equivocal between them. My sincerity was even more questionable in the concluding sentence; since, far from having resolved maturely to weigh my future steps, I had never looked into the future at all. My love was yet in its infancy; or rather in that progressive state of the passion when the present is all-sufficient to happiness; when the new and delightful sentiment is just awakend in the bosom, and has not yet given one single jog to that long train of doubts, jealousies, desires, and disquietudes, which render it ever afterwards so troublesome. My host, however, had done this business completely for me. From the very hour he and I talked together, I found that love was no such sport of the fancy as I had hitherto imagined, and I began, indeed, to look to the future with an anxious eye.

I presently discovered that the birth of Claudine was noble: this I was sorry for, because mine was not. Her story was simple, and, in fact, the history of thousands. She had lost her father, who had fallen a sacrifice to his political opinions, at a very early period of the French revolution. Her mother, in escaping from France, had been shipwrecked in her voyage to St. Petersburg, and, from the consequences of fatigue and suffering, had soon after left Claudine an unprotected and impoverished orphan. For this I was no less sorry than for the circumstances of her birth: for I suspected that it would be my lot to be too opulent; and I began, like my good host, to doubt the concurrence of my family in the step I was meditating. My calculations on this head have proved erroneous however. It has not yet been my lot to be very rich, and it probably never will; but my mind is made to my fortune, and I do not envy those who boast a more splendid one.

My first effort at thinking was not at all successful. I saw no point on which I could reasonably build; and I therefore grew fretful,—consequently fancied myself indisposed. I was indeed really ill for two or three days. My host perceived it, and insensibly relaxed the rigidity of his muscles. What was much better, Claudine perceived it too; and I had the exquisite happiness of believing that I was not indifferent to her. Sweet, though transitory moments that enliven existence, how precious is your recollection to a tender mind!

The first use I made of my returning health, was to impart to Claudine the sentiments with which she inspired me; and I received from that grateful and generous girl such a hearing as made an indelible impression upon my heart. Claudine, however, was so entirely the child of nature, and so wholly unskilled in the ways of the world, that to have consulted her upon those difficulties and probable inconveniences which her reverend guardian had conjured up to my imagination, would only have doubled them. She was, besides, not much more than seventeen, and had seen little beyond her mother's house and the walls of a convent. I was, therefore, thrown entirely upon my own fund of sagacity and prudence: and, to say truth, when I consider with how small a principal I set out, I must confess myself, in the commercial phrase, to have made no bad speculation.

I learned from Claudine that she had a brother who served in the army of the French princes, and whom her mother hoped to have joined at St. Petersburg. She had herself reason to suppose she might learn tidings of him at the court of the empress, although the obscure condition of the family with which she resided, and their distance from St. Petersburg had rendered the vague inquiries they had hitherto been able to make totally fruitless. The opportunity, it must be owned, was most tempting to a lover—a poor fellow who saw himself constrained to depart with a heart half broken, and a head not quite healed. I weighed secretly with Claudine the possibility of prevailing on her reverend protector to suffer her to depart with me in search of her brother: it was plain that we were novices in the ways of the world, or such a plan could not possibly have entered the head of either; but among the few peculiarities that marked the dear girl's character, (and she had none that were not graceful and becoming,) was an anxious desire to be restored to her family, and an opinion that she had no right to dispose of herself without the consent of this brother; who, being by many years the elder, she had been taught by her mother to look up to as the arbiter of her fate. She had, besides, long felt that her continued residence in Sweden was a burden on her benefactor, whose scanty income ill allowed him to exercise the generous feelings of his heart: and Claudine, brought up in affluence, had not yet been able to image such a genuine picture of poverty as should incapacitate her brother from receiving or maintaining her. Alas! she little knew the condition of many of her countrymen! I was not myself much better informed on the subject: and, to say truth, had I even been so, I fear I should have preferred the delightful idea of having Claudine my companion at St. Petersburg to all the sober objections that reason could possibly have presented to me.

We were not gone so far, however, in love or Arcadian simplicity as to conceive the idea of her accompanying me alone. Chance presented her a suitable protection in the society of a Swedish merchant and his family, to whom she was known, and who were to embark in the same vessel with myself. After much hesitation, then, I ventured to communicate our mutual wishes to my kind host. He looked extremely grave on the project, although I had dressed it up in colors as soberly simple as fancy and love would permit me. I found an auxiliary, however, where I did not expect one—in the person of his wife; who, being a good economist, and a woman of no great expansion of mind in other particulars, was not, I believe, sorry to seize the opportunity of freeing herself from a person whom she conceived to be an incumbrance in her domestic arrangements.

To be short, the lovely Claudine was committed to my protection,—but under the superintending eyes of a female Argus, who promised to watch carefully over her. On my part I faithfully swore either to place her in the care of her brother, or to make her my wife, at every hazard of circumstances, should she consent to become such without waiting his concurrence. In the interim I engaged to lodge her in the house of my own correspondent at Petersburg, a respectable merchant, the regularity of whose family left nothing in the arrangement liable to objection, and where I was not to become an inmate myself. I was so truly in earnest in all my declarations and plans, that I believe I left no doubt of my sincerity in the mind of my hearer. Yet the good man was not quite sure he was doing right in consenting to our scheme, and I saw tears in his eyes as he embraced us previous to our departure. Claudine also wept: nor could I forbear shedding tears of sympathy myself: though, such was to me the joyful sorrow of the moment, that I will not swear they did not spring from at least a blended emotion.

The clear beauties of a northern hemisphere in summer are only to be known by those who have witnessed them. The sun, hardly setting, left throughout the whole night a gentle twilight, which, illumined by the aurora borealis, presented new and innumerable charms both in the heavens and the ocean. The merchant's family, Claudine, and myself, often sat upon the deck during the greater part of these nights; and her sweet voice, in unison with the voices of some other female passengers, would frequently chant a sort of national and simple music, so perfectly harmonizing with the scene before us, as to fill the senses of every hearer with nearly equal delight. Never did the charming features of Claudine appear to more advantage than when seen by this soft and shadowy light. For my part, I almost wished my whole life was to be a voyage; and was truly sorry when we cast anchor in the harbor of Cronstadt. Here all was in contrast to the tranquillity we had been witnessing, and the bustle of trade and shipping would have driven away almost any sentiment less vigorous than love before the potent genius of gain.

Our plans at St. Petersburg were, I quickly discovered, in no immediate way to be realized. The traces Claudine had of her brother were so very imperfect, and so many changes had taken place in the distribution of the French regiments there, that it was extremely difficult to pursue our inquiries concerning him. I continued to make some, however; and, in the interim, I had now the double satisfaction of keeping in view the business my father had intrusted to me, and of enjoying daily the society of the woman I adored. Claudine, on her side, was anxiously employed in acquiring the English language and accent; and such was the delicacy of her organs, or her ear, perhaps aided by the inspiring influence of her tutor, that I have never since heard it spoken by any foreigner with equal purity. Although I had fulfilled with the strictest fidelity every engagement into which I had entered concerning her, she was yet by no means satisfied with her situation. Not that it was any way objectionable on the score of propriety; for she had every protection and accommodation that could be demanded. She was, besides, embosomed in an affluent family, and had dress, pleasures, in short, all the advantages that affluence itself could bestow: but it was to me that she owed them, and the delicacy of her mind taught her daily to revolt more and more from the nature of the obligation. Vainly did I represent to her that she had received the same, at least in the proportion of worldly circumstances, from her former protectors; that she was, in fact, my affianced wife, and that all I could offer her would be only what she had a claim to. Young as she was, she felt the difference of the relative situations; and such was the soft and retiring propriety this consideration gave to her manners, that though I complained, I could not but love her the better for it.

But although Claudine was, on the whole, self-denying and discreet in the extreme, she was too gentle, young, and lovely, to be always proof against solicitation. I delighted in showing her beauty, and I, therefore, took every opportunity of leading her into such scenes of elegance as might display it to advantage. The approach of winter in the northern courts is the signal for a species of festivity unknown in milder climates: and the amusement of driving *en traineau*, is practiced with a luxury and splendor that to a stranger is singularly dazzling. I was myself an expert performer that way, and, therefore, extremely ambitious of exhibiting at once my own talents and the charms of Claudine. She was, for a long time, averse to this proposal: I nevertheless extorted her consent, and I provided an elegant traineau, in which I placed my fair charge. Nothing can exceed the brilliancy and gayety of this kind of diversion. Numberless carriages, fancifully ornamented, all in motion at once, and flying over the snow with the velocity of fairy cars, carrying their beautiful enchantresses along with them, form a *coup d' œil* altogether delightful. Claudine was in high spirits; nor was I less elevated, though I can not impute even to the giddiness of my pleasure any blame as to the accident that followed.

We had already made our course, and were on the point of returning home, when a more numerous succession of carriages than before caused some slight apprehension from probable entanglements or embarrassment. Among the traineaus that lately entered was one guided by an officer: the lady who sat in it seemed, by the splendor of her appearance, and the rich furs in which she was wrapped, to be of very considerable rank; and her conductor, with more zeal than skill, threatened destruction to every carriage that came within his vortex. Unfortunately mine happened to be of the number. I remembered my last accident, and I was not willing to try the thickness of my head a second time. I was, besides, anxious for Claudine's safety, and I therefore exerted my jockey-ship in making over the danger to my antagonist. I was but too successful. We had a rude shock that threw us both into confusion. On his part the danger was imminent, and it was the chance of a moment that both he and the lady with him did not suffer material injury. His resentment burst out into an intemperance of language I was not at all disposed to endure. Our contention, therefore, soon amounted to little short of defiance on both sides. A general disorder ensued; and, such was the overbearing insolence of my adversary, that it would have been difficult to have foreseen the event between us, had not a party of guards interposed, and put an end to the tumult. We were separated; and I was, by authority, enjoined to return home.

Claudine, who had during this scene been ready to faint with fear, now drew great consolation from a circumstance which certainly afforded me none—that of my being put under arrest within the house for several days. Her apprehensions for my personal safety left her no sympathy for the indignity to which I thought myself subjected. I was not so calm, though I found it necessary to seem so; and the first care of both, though for different reasons, was to inform ourselves of the name and rank of my antagonist. He was called, it appeared, the Count St. Victoire. Nothing more was necessary to assure Claudine that it was her brother.—St. Victoire had quitted his country before the death of his father: he was, indeed, among the first of that ill-informed or ill-judging part of the nobility who sought safety or revenge in a foreign one. His sister was at that time a child, and immured within the walls of a convent. The duties of the service into which he had entered, as most of the young nobility of France were accustomed to do at a very early age, had not permitted him to be much at Paris; and she had, therefore, seen him so rarely, that it was not at all surprising she did not recognize him, clothed as he was in furs too for the occasion, and under the circumstances of terror and agitation on her part in which they at length met.

The alarm I experienced on this discovery was little short of that felt by Claudine herself. Of all men living her brother was, perhaps, the one I would most have wished to serve: he was certainly the last I would willingly have offended. Yet I felt that, after what had passed, it would be difficult, to say the least, for either to conciliate the good will of the other. There was something in the manners of St. Victoire that announced him at first sight to be what he really proved; and I conceived from that moment an evil presentiment concerning him. I left Claudine to take her own measures in making herself known to her brother, and I waited impatiently to see what would be the event of our quarrel, as soon as it should be ascertained that my temporary restraint was at an end. This happened sooner than I expected. On the second day my arrest was taken off; but an express order from court forbade either of us to testify further resentment against each other; and enjoined, what it was not in the power of any court to enforce, a total forgetfulness of the past. On my side I was obliged to enter into a sort of recognizance that should secure my obedience; which I was contented to do, as I found St. Victoire lay under a restriction from his commanding officer little inferior to mine. I had afterwards reason to know that the argument made use of to induce his easier compliance with what was required of him was the disproportion of rank between himself and his antagonist. I was far from suspecting this at the time; otherwise I am not sure my Caledonian blood would have patiently tolerated it.

While peace was thus apparently restored between us, Claudine had not been wanting in any effort, on her part, that might render it either permanent or sincere. St. Victoire was at first greatly surprised at discovering his sister, and much struck with her beauty, as well as with the native charms of her character. The dear girl, I doubt not, spared no eloquence to make him a convert to mine: but she was not so successful as, I will venture proudly to say, she deserved to be. St. Victoire could not, indeed, deny that I appeared to have acted both generously and delicately towards his sister: but he took care to invalidate the merit of my conduct by representing the probability of its proving, in the end, to be either uncertain or insidious. I burned with resentment; but I had no resource. I could not again embroil myself with the brother of Claudine; and had I done so, I should not have remedied my misfortune; for although she lamented his injustice as much as I did, she could not be prevailed upon absolutely to revolt from his authority. She was, besides, much under age; and had no power, either according to the regulations of her own country or of those in which she resided, to set him at defiance.—And now I believe we both bitterly regretted Sweden, our good old friend there, and the tranquil happiness we had enjoyed under his roof. St. Victoire, however, after some days of deliberation, constrained himself to render me personal thanks for the protection I had afforded his sister. He did it so proudly as to convince me that he meant to discharge both himself and her from the obligation: but I had not much leisure to ruminate upon his intentions, for he presently announced to me "that Claudine was now become his care: that it was his purpose immediately to remove her from the *very respectable* hands in which I had placed her, to a situation more suitable to her country and her condition in life: that he should be very happy to acknowledge my civilities in every mode that lay in his power; and he hinted at any pecuniary demands which I might be entitled to make." This put me out of all patience. I knew him to be poor; and I believed myself to be rich enough to have bought half his regiment: but it was not the question of poverty or riches that lay between us: honor, sensibility, and every thing dear to a noble mind, was included in it.

I told him plainly, and at once, the mutual engagements that subsisted between myself and Claudine. I professed before Heaven there was no affluence I could have offered that deserving and lovely girl which I should have thought equal to her merits; but I could not conquer myself so far as to forbear adverting with disdain to the pecuniary indemnification hinted at in his speech, whether I considered the offer merely, or the resources of him who offered it.—I concluded with a protestation that nothing should tear Claudine from me; and I referred him to herself, to know whether she would be prevailed upon to give me up.

I had now made things a thousand times worse than they were before. St. Victoire commanded his pride, indeed, so far as to answer me in terms of decent civility; but I could easily perceive that I had exasperated and nettled him to the very soul. He made extremely light of my reference to his sister: affecting to consider her as a child who was incompetent to judge of her own wishes. He gave me very clearly to understand that he had influence enough at court to defeat any that I might flatter myself with possessing; and very civilly insinuated that the son of a merchant could never, under any circumstances, either of wealth or poverty, be a match for the sister of the Count St. Victoire.—Nothing more could be made of our conference, unless it had come to a serious and hostile appeal; which, for various reasons, each was unwilling it should do. We parted mutually out of humor, and mutually resolved to carry the future our own way.

Claudine was overwhelmed with grief when she learned the event of our conversation. Both she and I had been so deficient in knowledge of the world, and so little used to calculate the various points of view in which circumstances appear to various characters, that it had never at any moment occurred to either of us to doubt our reception from her brother, or his approbation of the measures we had pursued. How great, then, was our disappointment to find the event we had so much desired now threatening to prove an insuperable obstacle to our union. I had even cause for additional chagrin, on reflecting that my own indiscreet wish of exhibiting my fair charge had exposed us mutually to this unforseen mortification. I had, nevertheless, entertained hitherto so clear a conviction that the sentiments I cherished for Claudine were such as, while they contributed to her happiness, would also place her out of the reach of those worldly sorrows and carking cares which corrode the sweetest buds of youth, that I experienced something like astonishment at the new light St. Victoire's opinions had thrown upon the whole business. They were not altogether so irrational, however, as my situation naturally inclined me to believe them. I even felt that they were not so; though I was unwilling to acknowledge it, even to my own heart. In spite of that air of levity and nonchalance with which he affected to speak of his sister, it was evident to me that he was much struck with her beauty, and built secretly upon it, as a certain means of procuring her a brilliant establishment. To say truth, I was not without an internal conviction of the same nature; and it was this which was my scourge. Perhaps we were both blinded by our partiality towards her;—so, however, it was.

Claudine entertained no such views or feelings. She conceived herself bound to me by every tie of gratitude or love, and she vindicated both my behavior and intentions with the dignity of a mind that feels itself above misconstruction. She did not indeed think herself entitled either by years or experience to determine her own conduct; but though she submitted that to the temporary authority of St. Victoire, she did not fail to tell him that nothing short of the conviction of demerit on my part would ever induce her to violate the engagement between us: and she peremptorily refused to shock or exasperate me by returning any of the gifts I had lavished on her. "Nothing fortune could bestow," she tenderly declared, "would be in her eyes so dear or honorable as those lasting memorials of poverty on her side, and of the most unalloyed generosity on mine."—These were refinements quite out of the way of St. Victoire. He had concluded it to be a matter of justice that, in taking away his sister, he should guard against my suffering any other loss. Alas! he had no conception of those feelings which, in certain cases, render acquittal an insult, and degrade us in our own eyes, by forcing us to discover that our best actions have been deemed venal and selfish!—"Oh! consent to be obliged to me!" have I been ready on other occasions to exclaim, when I have seen the proud and too susceptible heart shrink distrustfully from the tender offices of a kindness it feared it could not return. "Prove that you esteem me enough to believe that I am rewarded in the action of serving you!"

St. Victoire, in fine, like a true man of the world, concluded that his sister loved the baubles I had presented her with. He, therefore, gave up the contest; satisfied to gain his chief point her way, since he could not gain it his own; and he removed her that very night from the house in which she had hitherto resided, to that of the Marchioness de S——, a young French woman of considerable rank, whose husband had emigrated some time after St. Victoire, and was in the same regiment with the latter. The finances of the Marquis de S—— were said to be in better order than those of his friend: but he lived expensively, made a great figure, and indulged his wife in the same habits of dissipation and high play they had both formerly pursued at Paris. St. Victoire was by no means behindhand in extravagance. Through that mist of disappointment and chagrin which clouded my present prospects, I was not, therefore, without a ray of hope that the whole establishment of these high-toned noblesse was upon so uncertain a base as might bring Claudine once more within my reach, without any violent struggle on my part. How sweet to me was the idea that *she* would neither feel humbled nor degraded by such a circumstance, but would do me the justice to understand me. I had an interview with the dear girl on the evening before she left the house of our mutual friend. Her tears, her endearments, her protestations of unshaken constancy, calmed the burning indignation of my heart. I could deny nothing to her solicitation, and I, therefore, promised to attend the future with a degree of moderation I was not at first disposed to show.

The house in which Claudine now resided was one where I, of course, had no access: and, in spite of my promises, a few days rendered this constraint insupportable to me. I weighed maturely every possible motive of interest, kindness, or even hostility, by which I might hope to act upon St. Victoire; but in vain. He was a man so entirely out of my sphere both as to character and connections, so wrong-headed and cold-hearted, that I found no medium through which I could reach him. I was a thousand times tempted to have recourse to the most desperate; but to what purpose?—We were both, in the first place, under the immediate cognizance of authority: an attempt to defy it might occasion the most serious ill consequences, not only to ourselves, but to our countrymen. St. Victoire was, besides, unquestionably brave; and we could, therefore, at best meet only on a footing of equality. How, if fortune gave me the advantage, should I be benefited by it? In truth, the only benefit it appeared to me I could possibly derive from such a rencounter, was that of dying.—I had a little of the Anglo-mania in me, and there were moments of impotent rage and grief when I was inclined to think that no despicable resource.

A man, however, must take more than one bitter dose of disappointment, I believe, before he really comes to such an extremity: at least that was my case. I now endeavored, under the auspices of my correspondent at St. Petersburg, to apply myself more assiduously to business, in order to lighten my cares.—I had soon reason to suspect that it would, in fact, only increase them. I was seized with alarm at some critical circumstances that occurred, and censured myself for a remissness which yet, I believe, had had no material influence over my father's concerns; though in the moment of surprise I was disposed to think otherwise. My friend now also communicated to me some particulars relative to our affairs in England, which my correspondents there had, through kindness, forborne minutely to relate; and I perceived that while I had been solely occupied in lamenting griefs, some real, some chimerical, but all of them wholly selfish, an evil of the most serious nature impended over my family, and threatened to bring my own mortifications to their climax. I now exerted myself to retrieve lost time, and to recover certain debts, the amount of which had not hitherto appeared so material in my eyes as I found it ought to have done. My zeal, however, was too late: it could not have saved us, had it been earlier awakened; but it would have acquitted me to my own heart, which ever painfully throbs at the recollection; and I should have been better prepared to encounter what followed:—the first ships that arrived from England told me that my father had been declared a bankrupt.

I can not even yet think of the circumstance, without a renewal of those afflicting sensations by which I was at the moment stunned and overwhelmed. Here then was an end of my towering hopes, my high-spirited affluence and independence. Here was such a termination of every claim with respect to Claudine, as it would not be in her power even to counteract. For though she had been willing to bestow herself upon me, could I accept her? It seemed, on the contrary, that honor and justice commanded me to free her from her engagements, and thus give her those chances in life, on the event of which her brother had been so sanguine. From him my heart now revolted more entirely than before. I could not endure the triumph I believed he would have over me, or the opportunity he would take to exult to his sister in the superiority of his own judgment and prudence. I made no doubt but he would be little-minded enough to conclude that I had foreseen the misfortune that was likely to fall upon my family, and that I was aware I should make no sacrifice whatever in securing the possession of Claudine. Nay, it was not even clear to me, that, in the excess of his vanity and self-love, he would not suppose I had built something upon the advantages of such a connection. These, and similar reflections, together with various additional chagrins resulting from my situation, made me now in reality almost weary of existence. But I owed the care of mine to those dear relatives who were suffering with me, and who had not, like myself, youth and health to combat with difficulties.

It became highly necessary that I should return to England: but although I meditated so doing without taking leave of Claudine, my resolution, nevertheless, failed me as the time drew near. I will own, however, that, among my objections to seeing her, the situation in which I now stood was one. My mind, unlike hers, was not sufficiently self-poised to avoid finding a humiliation in poverty; or possibly the recollection of her brother was blended too intimately with that even of herself,—and, O! how different were they in their natures!—to admit of my being governed by a genuine and unmixed feeling. The cruel hour of separation at length arrived. Claudine and I parted as most lovers part, with many tears, many protestations, and some caresses. She was never very lavish of those: yet I know not how it was, but she had the art of convincing me that no want of love occasioned her reserve. She had little reason I found to be satisfied with the situation in which her brother had placed her. It obliged her daily to see a number of giddy young officers, none of them in circumstances to realize the sanguine expectations of St. Victoire, though sufficiently susceptible or gallant to be troublesome to his sister. Nevertheless, so great a blemish does the want of fortune cast on beauty, that I did not learn Claudine had any decided admirer of rank or affluence enough to expose her to persecution. In fact I gathered nothing of all this from herself: for of herself, except when the question of duties or affections arose, she seldom or never spoke. But my good friend, the merchant's wife, with whom she had resided, reserved for me constantly all the information it was possible to collect; and when that proved insufficient to fill up our conversations on the subject, we had a supplementary fund of conjecture that was never exhausted.

I did not fail to relate faithfully to Claudine, before we parted, the misfortunes in which I found myself involved, and those future ones I apprehended. Claudine, however, I quickly perceived, had not yet attained any distinct idea of poverty. She, indeed, conceived very clearly what it was to lose the luxuries of a spacious apartment, and a numerous train of domestics; to have nothing but a hired carriage at command, and to be restricted by prudence in the purchase of a trinket. All this she daily felt; therefore she understood it;—at her age we rarely look deeper. But such was the character of her mind, both for genuine simplicity and rational pleasures, that she was not able to make herself any griefs out of these and similar losses. Her humblest ideas of indigence extended to a plain, and sometimes scanty meal, like that of our good pastor; a cottage too like his, more calculated for utility than ornament, and certain common domestic occupations which the narrowness of his circumstances necessarily imposed on his wife and daughters.—How many people picture poverty in the way Claudine did!—Ah! should such be carried into the miserable hovels where real indigence resides!—should they there see their fellow-creature, possibly their equal, stretched out in sickness and hopeless misery!—should they see, not privation, but famine;—not disappointment, but despair;—babyhood without playfulness, manhood without vigor, and age without nourishment; how would their erring, but tender and humane hearts, suffer under the spectacle!—Let us not deceive ourselves!—Extreme and abject poverty is, vice excepted, the most deplorable condition of human nature!—It carries not, as the more acute sufferings of body or of mind do, a balm or a termination in itself. No!—it is like water poured drop by drop upon the brain of a criminal, till the whole man groans under excruciating torture!—Should I expose the dear girl I loved, even remotely, to the experience of so cruel an evil?—My whole soul revolted from the idea.

"Listen to me, my dear Claudine!" said I, as we were parting. "When I offered you my hand and my heart I believed that I could add to them the blessings of independence at least: it has proved otherwise, and your brother was more correct in his calculation of the chances of life than we supposed him to be. I will never rob the sister of the Count St. Victoire, or rather I will never rob my own Claudine, of such real advantages in it as she has a right from her merit or charms to expect; though I would, without scruple, have permitted her to sacrifice to our mutual attachment those ideal goods, those factitious substitutes, for all that is really valuable and honorable in human nature, to which common minds bow down with so implicit a reverence.—While you love me, however, dearest Claudine! you are, and can be only mine: but should you cease to do so, the bond between us is from that moment broken: nor shall an injurious thought, much less a reproach, pursue you on my part." These were high-sounding words; but I have on reflection believed them not so sincere as they then appeared to be. There was certainly a little of the chicanery of love in them.—I softened her soul by the idea of my approaching departure; I won over every tender and grateful feeling of her mind by the recollection of the past: finally, I subdued her sensibility by the extravagance of my own; and when her enthusiasm was at its highest, I then said to her, "Claudine, if your heart makes another choice, renounce me." All this was perhaps at last only an ingenious artifice of self-love!—but when a man does not know he is artificial, I think he may be pardoned. Nevertheless, if it was really my intention to extort fresh protestations of constancy from Claudine, I was disappointed; for she made none: she wept bitterly, however; and her expressive eyes, while she listened to me, rendered language unnecessary. I embraced her once more, and immediately after embarked for England.

This voyage was not like the last. I no longer found any charms either in the heavens or the ocean; and my thoughts wandered incessantly over the past and the future with the most painful anxiety. We had not been long at sea before a heavy gale arose that rendered our navigation even less pleasant than before. When I heard the sailors talk of the danger of the breakers, and saw, though at a distance, the horrible prospect they presented, I thought of Claudine and her unfortunate mother, flying, like many others of their countrywomen, from their native land, from all that was dear or familiar, to contend with elements no less inhospitable to them than the human race. After beating about some days, we ran at length for security into a small Swedish port. I was tempted to land, in order to set my foot in the country where I had first seen Claudine, and to make a sort of love-pilgrimage towards the very spot. However, I resisted this impulse of romance; and it was lucky I did so; I should otherwise have lost my passage: for the wind became fair a few hours after, and it was not long before I landed in England.

I found my father's situation there even more perplexing than I had expected it to be. His concerns had been so multiplied and so various, that it required the most persevering assiduity to disentangle them, or reduce the chaos to order. This was in a great measure my employment: my days were necessarily devoted to it: and, after immense application, I returned home spiritless and exhausted of an evening, to rise the ensuing morning to the same painful occupations. People to whom life is a plaything know nothing of such cares as fill up the hours of one half of the community, and too often unfit them, not merely for its frivolous, but often its social intercourse: yet these apparent favorites of fortune, like spoiled children, often become weary of their toy, while those in whose hands it is an engine of either private or public utility, have always within themselves a source of honorable satisfaction:—and such, in the midst of my vexations, was mine!

My father was a man of strict probity and deep intellect; but his manners were not ingratiating, and his understanding was of that biting and repulsive kind which makes few friends. He had a decided love of scheming; and his plans had, for the most part, been both sagacious and successful: a concurrence of circumstances had now rendered them far otherwise. The consequence was that he became bitterly censured, and even indirectly calumniated. He was too proud to endure this, and too helpless to remedy it. His constitution sunk under the conflict; and I found him, on my arrival in England, far gone in a malady that had every appearance of proving mortal.

It is in the hour of sorrow, sickness, or poverty, that we learn how to estimate our natural affinities. Placed on the pinnacle of health and prosperity, man stands a sort of independent and self-possessed being, whom the ties and affections only touch at certain points: reduce him from this station in society, and he will at once become sensible of his own insufficiency. It is then he will, perhaps, best learn the value of those friends with whom nature has providently furnished him, and whose habits, tastes, affections, nay even weaknesses, most in sympathy with his own, calculate them to take place of all others. Never were my parents and myself so much attached as at this juncture: yet it was a sorrowful one; and I still can not remember without a pang the hour when I lost my father. In addition to this heavy calamity, my mother had the grief of seeing her only brother alienated from us some months before, by the circumstances in which our late bankruptcy had involved him. He was a man of considerable property, and therefore stood the shock; but he did not easily forgive the person who exposed him to the hazard, and all intercourse between him and my father had been consequently broken off. On the death of the latter he came to visit my mother; but he expressed no desire to see me, and I was too proud to obtrude myself upon him.

I had now neither hope nor dependence in life. The narrow income my mother's settlement enabled her to rescue from the wreck of our affairs was barely equal to her support. I had myself received too many indignities, or at least what I conceived to be such, from the few who called themselves my father's friends, during the progress of our misfortune, to place the smallest reliance upon them; and I was torn to pieces between the claims of nature and those of love. Claudine was ever first and last in my thoughts, amid all my cares and torments: but

I saw no chance of calling her mine. I could even hear from her but seldom; and although her own letters, when they reached me, breathed the most unchanged affection, my friend, the merchant's wife, failed not to supply her husband with little reports, which if they did not absolutely excite my distrust, yet created something in my bosom so nearly allied to jealousy as severely to increase my incidental chagrins. His manner of relating them was, besides, so cold and laconic, that I hardly knew what to conclude or gather from his hints: to say truth, I have since had reason to believe that the chief object of both these well-meaning, though mis-judging people, was in unison with what they believed would be the wish of my friends,—to break an engagement that threatened only ruin to either of the parties concerned. I, like Claudine, was not without some natural or acquired advantages; and the worthy man at St. Petersburg, therefore, concluded that, if detached from her, I should most probably settle with some commercial family in England, marry, as he had done, one of the daughters, and step in for as large a portion of the goods of this world along with her as I honestly could contrive to do.

This might, perhaps, have happened: and, indeed, my affairs went on in a train that seemed not to make it unlikely: but I had no taste for the project. I revolved many, although that was not among the number, without being able to fix on one. I had secretly a strong desire to plunge into some adventurous scheme abroad; but I was fettered by two opposing sentiments, which were fated by turns to engross my life and my heart. My mother's health was daily declining: she had neither support nor consolation but me, and the period of her existing there seemed likely to be so short, that I could not resolve to abbreviate it. I, like Gray, had found out that "a man can never have more than one mother:" and mine had, from very childhood, retained a strong interest in my affections. I never in my life saw a creature so perfectly feminine, without being insipid or weak: yet she had neither a very lovely person, nor a highly cultivated understanding; but she was so gentle, so indulgent, so truly conjugal and maternal, so admirably calculated to soothe the bitter moments of life, and to enjoy without intoxication its modest and genuine pleasures, that my heart, even in manhood, was almost as much hers as though she had been amongst the most dazzling of her sex.

While I was in this anxious state of indigence and indecision, a proposal was made me from a house with which my father had had some commercial connections, that promised to be in the end sufficiently advantageous to merit consideration at least. My mother was urgent with me to accept the overture. She did not at the moment confide to me all her reasons, because she feared they might prove visionary; but I could easily see she had the matter deeply at heart. The situation was not such as I should myself have desired: but I knew that I had the reputation of indulging a proud and almost a rebellious spirit, as far as the world was concerned, the energy of which had been increased by my education and habits. I took therefore a sort of malicious pleasure in disappointing the plodding calculators of my father's acquaintance, who had affirmed I had no useful abilities; and I half resolved to prove to them that what I could resolve to undertake I could execute, with talents far beyond their methodical dullness. This was again the project of a young man; but I never could feel a half-interest in any thing. My pride, as well as my future advantage, was deeply staked upon that before me; and I consequently turned my attention towards it, with a zeal that not only astonished others, but, to say truth, surprised even myself.

Behold me, then, doomed for my offences, whatever those were,—and my conscience, I own, did not reproach me with many,—to spend the greater part of the day on a high stool, and go through all the drudgery of a counting-house—busy with invoices, &c., &c.—and at intervals execrating French aristocracy, Russian traineaus, and English speculation. I saw my mother only of an evening: but I saw her countenance lighted up at those meetings with an unusual degree of complacency and softness: even her health seemed to amend: and if I was at some moments disposed to break my chain, I never visited her without finding fresh motives for enduring it. Our meals were necessarily frugal, and our indulgences few; yet my income, though narrow, was a considerable addition to hers; I, therefore, daily perceived the impossibility of alienating it. On feeling the lightness of my own purse, my conduct towards St. Victoire, nevertheless, sometimes came home to me. I remembered the half disdainful hints I had thrown out on his poverty; and although they were certainly extorted by no small degree of insolence on his side, I became sensible that I had degraded my own character by returning it. It was now my part to be indigent. I did not feel myself at all the less proud on that account; and I, therefore, learned to make allowances for him. Yet I saw, with half despair, that I was further removed than I had been at that period from all chance of conciliating his regard; since it was not even a concession like that I made to my own heart that would have done it: and it was very clear, that the man who had despised a rich merchant would, at all times, utterly shut his door against a poor one. Claudine and myself were, however, both growing older; and I concluded, that if we could but contrive to grow richer too, we might at length reasonably set his authority at defiance.

In spite of the mystery my mother had thought it prudent to observe, it was not long before I penetrated into the motives of her conduct. When chance sent me home to her lodgings at an unexpected hour, I more than once encountered my uncle coming from them. Our meeting appeared at first to disconcert him: by degrees he seemed to accustom himself to it, and at length bestowed on me a half-gracious salutation. I returned the civility, but made no overtures towards improving it. I learnt, however, from third persons, that his visits were pretty frequent: and had I not done so, I should have known by a certain number of additional comforts and conveniences I observed my mother to possess lately, and which I knew our limited means would not have allowed her to indulge in, that some more certain resources than our own were concerned in them. This was every way balm to my heart; not from its flattering any views that immediately respected myself, but as I knew that the returning kindness of her brother was, of all possible events, the most grateful to hers, and could not fail to be in wordly circumstances infinitely advantageous. In law I was eventually my uncle's heir; but he had cut off both my mother and myself, by a will made several months before the death of my father; and as his fortune was his own to bestow, we could, under these circumstances, claim nothing but the little stipend which his fraternal regard had induced him to allot his sister. A reconciliation might still, indeed, incline him to change the disposition of his worldly concerns; but I now knew too much of life to have any great reliance upon this hope, and too much of the dilatory nature of most men not to doubt whether mere indolence might not defeat his purpose, should it even be favorable towards me. I made no doubt, however, but my mother formed a thousand chimerical projects, the first step towards the accomplishing of which would be to associate me in my uncle's commercial undertakings: and as she was most sanguine in her opinion of my personal influence and abilities, to whatever point they were directed, I was sure she secretly persuaded herself that I should in time prove the sole manager, and, finally, the heir of his wealth.

My plan was far different; but I seemed to shut my eyes to what was passing, and permitted her to follow her own in the manner she deemed most judicious. In fact, I earnestly wished her to acquire such a share, both in the heart and domestic concerns of her brother, as would make her accede with less reluctance to any bolder project I might adopt towards my own establishment in life: for in spite of the external show I continued to make of content and application, my very soul was secretly weary of the uniform and mechanical sort of existence I now endured: or perhaps it was the restless spirit of love that thus undermined my quiet, and rendered me at heart thoroughly averse from a sort of occupation, which, had I possessed a disengaged mind, my early acquirements and habits ought to have fitted me for. What led me to suspect this, was, that my plans, begin at what point of the compass they would, always, in the end, pointed towards St. Petersburg; and, though, reasonably speaking, it was of all places on the globe the last where I could have submitted to appear in any subordinate situation, something relative to it was ever uppermost in my fancy. Even while meditating a voyage to India I detected myself thinking of the snows of the north: and winter, "all unlovely as it was," proved, from the association of ideas, to me a season of enjoyment.

Whatever was to be the event of *my* plans, my mother's, at least, seemed in a way to be slowly successful. My uncle invited me several times to dine with her at his house; and although I had no great cause to be flattered by my reception there, for he still continued to show me very little distinction or regard, I was, on the whole, better pleased with this sort of conduct, than if he had conceived a strong personal liking for me. I did not, in fact, believe he had any; though his indulgence towards his sister induced him to put a constraint on himself: but I was, nevertheless, a little staggered when I learnt, from a mutual friend on whose veracity I could rely, that, however cold his manners were to me when present, he had spoken of me, when absent, in such terms as hardly any but a father would have used. I began myself to suspect that a gleam of sunshine was likely to burst remotely upon my path; and though I could not altogether shape my expectations into any form wholly gratifying, I felt the burden I had imposed upon myself become daily less heavy.

Mine, grievous as it seemed to me, was, nevertheless, far short of what I continually saw fall on others. Among those whom the concerns of business threw in my way, was a young Frenchman of the name of Vaudreuil. He had been recommended by an eminent house of Rouen, and was engaged for the foreign department in ours. His talents for business seemed to be moderate, but his industry and application were unequaled; so was his temperance. He lived on air: never tasted wine, nor shared in any conviviality whatever. Contrary to the general character of his countrymen, he was serious in the extreme. His manners were thought proud; and, as he was known to be poor, he was of consequence little liked by those with whom he was in some degree obliged to associate. I had, for Claudine's sake, a slight partiality for those of her country; and I occasionally manifested it towards him. It was increased when I found that he had been dispatched from Rouen to St. Petersburg, before he was sent over to England, and had seen Claudine herself. It was not at all probable that his condition in life should have allowed him to mingle in her circle; but I, nevertheless, took pleasure in talking with one who had even seen her only. I found him extremely agreeable when I came to converse with him; and I suspected that he had not been always a man of business. This, however, was a confession I never could extort from him; and his reserve naturally created the same sentiment on my part. Once the extreme narrowness of his circumstances obliged him to have recourse to me for a pecuniary assistance; and I could see the excessive pride of his soul by the tears it forced into his eyes. As this event, however, did not seem to increase his confidence in me, it naturally threw a still greater check upon every attempt I might have been inclined to make towards acquiring it.—I think we esteemed each other more than before; yet a sort of coldness grew up between us—the natural consequence of a feeling which, by some opposing principle, is not permitted to act with the force it demands. One more powerful, and even torturing, was awakened in my bosom by a very simple accident, and it related to Vaudreuil.

We had engaged to go into the country together on a particular day, as much to satisfy ourselves on a point of curiosity as pleasure.—I had promised to call upon him. He was not quite dressed, and I went into his room. While conversing with him there, I happened to cast my eyes upon a black ribbon which was at his bosom;—it seemed to me as if a picture ought to depend from it, and I was seized with a singular fit of curiosity to ascertain whether there was one or not. I kept my attention earnestly directed towards the ribbon, and at length was gratified. I saw it was, indeed, a picture, but my heart suddenly bounded, and my pulse throbbed, for I believed it to be that of Claudine.—I had now the eye of an Argus, and I had more than one accidental opportunity of reconnoitering the portrait. It was, beyond doubt, either that of Claudine, or of some person strongly resembling her.—In a broken and irresolute tone I strove to rally Vaudreuil on the subject. He made no answer, but he sighed deeply, thrust the picture into his bosom, and buttoned it up there. I had now room for meditation more gloomy than any I had ever yet indulged. I recollected all the hazards that attended my engagement with Claudine, and the indirect release I had proffered her when we parted. How could I be assured that she had not availed herself of it? Vaudreuil might be nobly born and highly bred. I saw nothing against this supposition. He had been to Petersburg. He might, for aught I knew, be the most intimate friend of St. Victoire, and in his eyes, therefore, however poor, not exceptionable as the husband of his sister. Claudine's country, her habits of thinking, time, distance, and the influence of her brother, might have wrought a change in her affections; and while I was waiting the slow aid of the future to assure my happiness, the past might already have undermined it.—While I think of the tragical moments I endured in consequence of all these conjectures, I can not help admiring how ingenious man is in tormenting himself, and how much a little common sense would on certain occasions befriend him.

As our party was composed of several persons, it was not possible for me, throughout any part of that day, to bring Vaudreuil to such conversation as might enlighten my doubts. I passed, therefore, the most anxious and miserable of nights, one half of which was spent in writing to St. Petersburg; and I arose almost with the dawn, determined to satisfy myself on the subject which agitated me. Alert as I was, Vaudreuil seemed no less so; for at a very early hour in the morning I received a note from him, expressed singularly well, but with a tone of depression, that, in spite of the suspicions which haunted me, excited the deepest interest in his fate. It contained a request for a small sum of money, and an urgent entreaty that it might, if possible, be sent by the bearer.—Vaudreuil had acquitted himself of his former obligation to me in a manner highly honorable to his feelings, though in reality grievous to mine: for I was sure that nothing but the most painfully rigid economy could have enabled him to do so. Yet what he would not acknowledge, delicacy forbade me to wring from him: and I had, therefore, contented myself with obliging him by every indirect method I could possibly devise. Though he did not notice this, I had seen, on many occasions, that it sunk deeply into his soul, and I believed it had rendered him even more reluctant to demand any service from me. I had no doubt that something critical had occurred that induced this application, and I, therefore, without inquiry or hesitation, sent him a larger sum than he requested, reserving my explanation with him to a late hour of the day, when I hoped the exigency that had thus suddenly occurred would be settled.

I found the time insupportably long in the interim. It did not at all surprise me that Vaudreuil failed to appear to execute his daily employment; but I was thunderstruck on being informed that he had thrown it up.—This, however, was not altogether true. He had, indeed, stated to his employers that it would not be possible for him to attend during a period, the extent of which he could not decide: but it was by no means clear, from the tenor of his letter, that he would return to it no more.—I flew to his lodgings: but I there learned only a confirmation of my chagrin; for he had discharged them the moment he received the money from me; and the persons of the house could give me no other account of him than that he walked towards the city to find out some public conveyance by which he might leave London.

Had I been sure Claudine was his companion, I think I could hardly have been more enraged. In the first transports of surprise and indignation I at once concluded that he had observed my emotion at sight of the picture; that he was perfectly aware of the interest I took in the original; and that he had basely practiced upon my credulity by making the supply I had sent him the means of extricating either her or himself, or both, from my resentment. Nothing, however, was less likely than any of these suppositions. Vaudreuil did not seem the man who would shrink from any person's resentment; much less take advantage either of generosity or credulity. It was improbable in the extreme that Claudine should be in England; and it was perfectly absurd to suppose that he had shipped himself off, at an hour's notice, for St. Petersburg.—I was not without an inclination to ship myself off, nevertheless;—but I grew cooler as I continued to reflect. The picture, after all, might not be that of Claudine. Vaudreuil might have concerns that called him thus suddenly away, without any reference to love; and, above every thing, there was internal evidence in the style of his letter, and my knowledge of his character, that he would, under any circumstances, return.

My reason was tolerably satisfied; but the aching demand of my heart was not appeased. More events, however, are sometimes comprised within a few hours than at others pass in years. While I was thus racking my imagination on the subject of Claudine and Vaudreuil, my mother's patience, and her messenger's, had been wearied in seeking me. I was found at last; and I learned, not without a strong emotion of anxiety and surprise, that I had been sent for to my uncle, who was taken with an apoplectic fit. I hastened immediately to his house, where I found my mother; by whom I was informed that every effort to recover him had been fruitless.—As he had never been sensible from the moment she saw him, she had had no opportunity of strengthening his good will towards me; or of influencing him in the disposal of his worldly affairs by the sight of her own tenderness and grief. All her highly cherished hopes, therefore, were suddenly blighted; and, in addition to a very afflicting calamity, she had a disappointment to encounter for which she was wholly unprepared.—That I felt was very small.—I had never relied on my uncle, and had been, in fact, more afraid of his entangling me by some half kindness, that would have rendered him the arbiter of my actions, than sanguine in my expectations from his generosity. My mother knew, however, that she should in some degree benefit by his will (though resentment towards my father had excluded me from so doing); and we were accordingly present when it was opened.

The first thing that excited our attention and surprise was the date, which was more recent than we expected. Being a bachelor, he had no immediate relatives, ourselves excepted, on whom to bestow his wealth. He gave a considerable number of legacies, however, to many of his friends; he settled a large portion of his personal fortune on my mother:—but both she and I looked at each other with astonishment, when we found the residue was allotted to me. This residue included a commercial property to some extent, together with an estate which he had purchased in his native country, Lanerkshire. Never shall I forget the look my mother gave me:—it was so sweet an approbation of the sacrifices she believed I had made to moderation and to her tranquillity:—it conveyed to my soul so tender an assurance, that she was persuaded I owed to my own self-government the good fortune I had thus unexpectedly encountered, that it was more flattering to me than if I had received the wealth of the world. On her side, I believe, the acquisition of half of it would have been less delightful than that of her "simple native vale."—The romantic falls of the Clyde had been the scene of her earliest and tenderest recollections; it was in that neighborhood, too, I was born; and the spot was endeared by a variety of nameless local charms, congenial to the most insensible bosom, and peculiarly so to those of my country. I also was not without my little hoard of hopes and recollections; but they were somewhat damped by the vague doubt I had lately cherished with regard to Claudine. My mother easily discerned I had something struggling in my mind beyond even those emotions naturally excited by the occasion.—She had long entertained a surmise that I had some attachment; but she naturally concluded that it was subdued by prudence, and, therefore, waited tranquilly till the impulse of my own heart should induce me to confide it to her. This was not the moment to do so. I could not prevail on myself to let her see that I doubted the fidelity of Claudine; and, in truth, the circumstance on which I founded my doubt, however perplexing to the imagination of a lover, was in itself so puerile and uncertain, that I knew not how to reveal it.

I waited impatiently the return of Vaudreuil; for I was persuaded that he would return, or that I should at least hear from him, though it were only in discharge of the pecuniary obligation between us; and I was necessarily obliged to employ myself, in the interim, in the regulation of my uncle's concerns. I did this with the more alacrity, as it was my intention, the moment they were in any safe train, to embark for St. Petersburg, bear the news of my own change of fortune to Claudine, decide by her looks and her reception of me upon the interest I still held in her heart, and, if I found that unchanged, prevail with her to withdraw, either openly or in secret, from the authority of St. Victoire, and accompany me to England as my wife.—A long and cruel fortnight passed, however, without any tidings of Vaudreuil. During that period I could hardly at intervals forbear smiling, to see those who now called themselves my friends imputing the indifference and half melancholy which hung about me to a hypocritical sorrow for my uncle's death. I believe I was looked upon by these men of the world as a complete dissembler; and so far were they from calculating what passed in my heart, that I have no doubt they thought me secretly overwhelmed with exultation and joy.

I had been so indefatigable in my exertions, as soon to prepare every thing for my approaching departure. I meditated in what manner I should, without saying too much, communicate to my mother the nature of the business that carried me abroad; and I was walking, deeply engrossed with my own reflections, along the Strand, when, happening to cast my eyes upon a hackney-coach that passed me, I saw Vaudreuil in it. It was driving very fast; and beyond my reach, before I had recollection to stop it.—I could entertain no doubt, however, that it was him, for he bowed to me smilingly as he passed. His countenance was more lighted up; and, from the glance I caught of him, I thought he seemed better dressed than usual.

This was a mystery, the unraveling of which at once engaged all my attention. That Vaudreuil should be in London, should know himself to be my debtor, yet neither write nor call upon me; should be aware that he stood exposed to the most degrading suspicion, yet coolly bow to me from a hackney-coach, seemed almost beyond belief. I went to his former lodgings; but he had not been heard of there. I then hastened to the counting-house where he had been used to attend, but no tidings of his return had reached any of the clerks. A letter, however, was put into my charge, addressed to him, that had been sent thither by the people with whom he had lived. I knew it instantly to be the hand-writing of Claudine, and I could, therefore, no longer doubt it to be her picture which he wore.—All my suspicions again recurred. I was on the point of tearing open the letter in order to satisfy them:—but I remembered I had no claim over Vaudreuil, but one I should have blushed to profit by; and that, if he had even robbed me of Claudine's affections, it was sufficiently probable that he never knew I had engaged them. No other acquittal but that of the petty money concern between us was, in the apparent state of the business, necessary on his part; and such was the confidence inspired by the kind of character I had observed in him, that I was still persuaded, if there was any thing treacherous in his conduct, he would at length appear to answer it. The letter had no ship-mark: I examined that of the post; it was from Hull.—My voyage to Petersburg would then be fruitless.—Claudine was evidently not there.—The appearance of Vaudreuil would be, perhaps, alike useless to me. She would probably have bestowed herself upon him before we met;—for, if there was no treacherous motive in her voyage, why did she not write to me? I had not even heard from her for a considerable time before. But this circumstance I had hitherto imputed to some accidental failure of her letters: that before me announced a different reason for her silence; and I had the torture of supposing she was at that very moment in London, yet as far out of the reach of my penetration as if in the wilds of Siberia. I returned home extremely melancholy, and, to my great surprise, found waiting for me there the very person I had been over half the town in search of—in other words, Vaudreuil himself. In my hand I held Claudine's letter, which I had taken possession of, leaving word where it was to be found; and I advanced towards him with a turbulence and impatience of which he did not seem at all sensible. His countenance was, indeed, as it had appeared to me in the coach, animated and cheerful: in a word, he looked happy, and that was enough to make me miserable.

"I come," said he, stepping towards me, "to demand your congratulations, and to announce a piece of good fortune in which you will sympathize with me."

"Spare yourself the relation," said I, sullenly—"I know the good fortune that has befallen you without its being told. You are married—or on the point of being so.—And, to show you that I am better informed of your affairs than you suppose, I can even name the faithless woman who has bestowed herself upon you."

"When I do marry," said Vaudreuil, laughing, "I hope it will not be a faithless woman, at least.—You are, in truth, a most ingenious guesser: and after you have pointed out the fair one who means to do me the favor of bestowing herself upon me, I shall know what portion of gratitude is due both to you and to her. In the interim, however, assure yourself that it is not matrimony, but that which has of late engrossed a much greater share of the thoughts of mankind, politics—which is in question with me.—I have received undoubted information that the new government in France will allow me to recover at least a considerable portion of my family claims and property there. I have never borne arms against my country; and should I prove successful in my application, I shall be enabled to serve a brother who is less fortunately circumstanced, and a sister inexpressibly dear to me."

"You have a sister!" exclaimed I.

"Undoubtedly I have," returned Vaudreuil, smiling archly.

"And you wear her picture"—

"At my bosom!" and he drew it from thence.

"Ah, it is Claudine!—*my* Claudine—my *own* Claudine," cried I, snatching and kissing it rapturously a thousand times. Vaudreuil could not forbear smiling at an étourderie so foreign to all he had yet seen of my character.

"I am ignorant how soon she is to be your Claudine," said he at length, gently disengaging the portrait; but I know she is at present mine; and I am not quite assured that she will permit me to authorize such violent caresses.—Let us be seated, my kind friend," he added, recovering his usual interesting gravity of tone and manner; "and if you can command these transports of yours,—so little in unison with our ideas of English phlegm,—I will tell you, what I am sure you will have real pleasure in hearing—I will tell you that your generous interposition rescued Claudine and both her brothers from a state of half-despondency; that your pecuniary kindness supplied with necessaries and comforts the proud spirit and suffering frame of St. Victoire:—finally, that it has afforded Claudine herself the means of coming up to London, and of thanking you in person.—These, believe me, are not dreams," said he, perceiving me stare with astonishment: "it is but very lately that I have known the history of my own family: such as it is I will relate it to you.—I need not tell you that I am much younger than St. Victoire—there is, in fact, only the difference of two years between Claudine and myself:—but I look older—for I have suffered,"—he added, sighing. "From the time I had any use of reason, it unfortunately happened that my opinion on political subjects did not accord with those of my family—I was, therefore, an early outcast from it, and remained in France, when my relations quitted it, without their deigning to take the smallest interest in my after fate. My name was prohibited to Claudine's lips, as attaching disgrace to her own; and it was the constant habit of suppressing it that probably prevented its reaching your ears. I was not much more fortunate, however, in my political career than my father and my brother had been. The fickle and too enthusiastic nation of which I was an individual became sanguinary, and disgraced the noblest aim of humanity. I was nearly a victim to the guillotine; but a friendly banker at Paris concealed me, and by his assistance I passed in safety to Rouen. I was not without abilities, and am among those of my countrymen who think it no disgrace to use them. I applied myself under a borrowed name to business: but I did not find that I was wholly safe from persecution, and was, therefore, advised to quit France. My heart fondly turned towards St. Petersburg, where I believed I should find my mother, my brother, and my sister. As I was now rather more unfortunate than themselves, I conceived that my offences would be expiated in their eyes; and I accordingly embarked. I soon found that I had had the misfortune to lose one of the three, without being happy enough to recover the other two; for my reception from St. Victoire was neither brotherly nor generous. It was indeed such as determined me to meet him no more; for I was not without some share of the family pride when it was roused. I saw Claudine accidentally for a quarter of an hour, but he would not permit me to converse with her freely. I wrote to her, however; and I requested from her my mother's picture, as a memorial of my family. She did not possess it; but she sent me her own, together with an earnest entreaty to see me again. No doubt she thought me very unkind; for I was so circumstanced that I could not enter the lists with St. Victoire on that subject, and he eluded my address when I attempted to send her another letter. I, therefore, quitted St. Petersburg without having an opportunity of vindicating my sentiments to her, and came over to England; where, by the continued assistance of my worthy friends at Rouen, I obtained an employment, in the course of which I was fortunate enough to meet with you.—Ah! your generous heart, my dear friend!" said he, pressing my hand, "has sympathized with mine during this narration!—May it be thus that good actions ever come home to the bosom of him who performs them!—You respected the innocent tenderness of Claudine, and that tenderness will, I hope, henceforward be unremittingly exercised to reward you!—You extended your philanthropy and good offices to a foreigner whom your countrymen did not always treat with the indulgence due to the unfortunate:—you have gained by it a friend, who will, to the latest hour of his life, be the friend of Englishmen, and the protector of those of any country to whom protection is necessary."

Vaudreuil spoke this with an energy and seriousness that was extremely affecting: or else its being my own panegyric caused it extremely to affect me. He spoke English tolerably; but on this occasion he expressed himself throughout in French: and I know not how it happens, but my translation seems to have lost all the fire and spirit of the original. Nothing now appeared necessary towards my felicity but to see Claudine. I told him as much; and at the same moment, recollecting the letter of hers I still possessed, I offered it to him.—"I have conversed with her since it was written," said he, putting it in his pocket; "and, therefore, know its contents.—St. Victoire is at this moment extremely fatigued, and in no condition to receive you. Claudine, who has not been many hours in town after a most rapid journey, will herself be the better for a short repose; and as she can not calculate that I should meet with you so soon, she will probably find it. You do not yet know by what means I became possessed of your secret. Have you no curiosity?—or are you so inhospitable that you are already solicitous to get rid of me?"

Vaudreuil was not wrong in his surmise. I could with great pleasure have taken him by the arm, and led him out of my house towards that in which I should find his sister. I had not the least curiosity to know how he became acquainted with my *secret*, as he called it. It appeared to me that the story would have done equally well at any time: and, in plain terms, that he could not have found one more mal à propos for telling it than that present; but I had my measures to keep. Vaudreuil had generously humbled both himself and his family too much before me, to allow me any liberty of action where they were concerned. I had, therefore, nothing for it but patience: and I endeavored to collect myself to a decent attention. I was restless, however, at first: but the subject was still Claudine and her brothers;—it therefore again insensibly interested and tranquilized me.

"I had not been long in England," said Vaudreuil, "before I wrote to St. Victoire. We had parted from each other in high displeasure: but when I recollected that it might be perhaps for the last time, I could not resolve to leave him and Claudine without any traces of me; or myself without a place in the remembrance of either. I thought in vain, however, to write to her; as he would, doubtless, again suppress my letter. Without being circumstantial, I gave him to understand that, on my arrival in England, I had fallen upon a plan by which I might secure myself from the horrors of penury. To say truth, I was afraid of explaining the nature of my employment, lest I should irreparably offend his aristocratical ideas;

but I made it plain that I solicited nothing from him but brotherly good wishes and regard. I exhorted him to allow Claudine at least sometimes to write to me, and gave him my address for that purpose. I received no answer to this letter; as indeed I hardly expected I should.

A considerable time passed away, every hour of which added to my melancholy, as I began to believe that I was fated to be always an alien from my family and connections; when, on the evening, or rather night, of that day on which you and I had been in the country together, I returned late to my lodgings, and, to my surprise, found a letter lying there for me, directed in a female hand. It was from Claudine, who wrote, at the desire of St. Victoire, to request my protection and assistance. They had landed together from a Russian merchantman at the port of Hull; driven abruptly from Petersburg by the indiscretion of St. Victoire. Claudine will give you the particulars of his quarrel with a Russian officer of distinction. They had a meeting in consequence of it, when both were wounded: the Russian severely. My brother, notwithstanding his own suffering, was put under confinement; and death or exile to Siberia seemed the punishment that awaited him. The recovery of his antagonist, however, and an interest he had the address to create for himself in the heart of a female favorite, mitigated his sentence. He was commanded to quit the Russian territories within a limited time, and to return thither no more under pain of death. The period allowed him to prepare for his departure was extremely short: his sickness, together with his extravagance, had left him totally unprovided with money, nor could his friend the Marquis de S—— assist him; for he had been himself obliged to withdraw from St. Petersburg some little time before; and his wife, from distress of circumstances, had retired to her father, the

Duc de C——. In this exigency, without assistants, advisers, or friends, St. Victoire and Claudine could think of no better plan than that of coming over to England, and throwing themselves upon me—Me!—whose miserable and impoverished state you are so well acquainted with!—The calculation they formed of it was, however, very different from the truth. In writing to St. Victoire, I had forborne to draw it in its worst colors, both for the reasons I have before given you, and the fear lest he should suspect me of wanting any pecuniary service from him. This delicacy on my part was the source of their error: they embarked full of chimerical hopes. Claudine has since told me, that, although she dared not hint as much to St. Victoire, there was yet another heart in your island on which she relied even more entirely than on mine—how justly, I have since had ample occasion to prove!—Their passage was rough. My brother's wound, which had been too hastily closed, opened again; but for Claudine's knowledge of English they would have been totally helpless; and such was altogether their situation soon after they landed, that no resource remained but to write to me, and exhort me to come and extricate them from it. Alas! I had no means to do so; and Claudine's letter was, therefore, a stab to my heart. At the moment I received it I neither possessed a single guinea, nor the means of raising one. You were the only human being to whom I had ever applied on a similar occasion, and I now ventured to throw myself a second time upon you. By an effort better suited to the liberality of your mind than to your circumstances, you sent me a more considerable sum than I had requested. I traveled night and day to reach Hull, and fortunately arrived there sooner than I had been expected; when I immediately called in proper assistance to St. Victoire, who was sufficiently altered both in constitution and manners to excite my tenderest sympathy. As to dear Claudine, she and I had soon cause to regret that we had not earlier understood each other's heart. Nothing could be more delightful than this first intercourse between two beings so nearly allied in blood, yet hitherto strangers. Your conversation and habits of thinking had enlightened her mind too much to allow of her cherishing the prejudices which had originally disunited me from my family; and I was no less delighted with the cultivation of her judgment than with the charms of her person. I told her exactly my own situation; and, without precisely naming you, described the generous friend whose assistance had enabled me to undertake my journey. Claudine, on her part, was not less frank. She related to me all the secrets of her heart, and bespoke an interest in mine for the man she loved. Imagine our mutual surprise—our lively and exquisite pleasure, when we found that we had in reality been talking of one and the same person!—There was nothing after this discovery so much the wish of either as to reach London with all possible dispatch. Claudine had already written a long letter to you, in order to account, by a relation of the late events that had befallen St. Victoire, for a silence that had exceeded her usual limits. At my desire she suppressed this letter. I hardly entertained a doubt but on the receipt of it you would have come to us at the hazard probably of great inconvenience to yourself; and, to speak frankly, I also promised my own heart an indescribable satisfaction in being the first to announce to you those delightful sensations in which I was certain you would sympathize. Claudine did not, I assure you, make the sacrifice I demanded of her without some regret: but she did make it: and the rather, as we had reason to suppose St. Victoire's health would amend rapidly enough to allow of our setting off without much delay. In fact you will perceive by the time of my absence that we made all possible speed. Our circumstances, nevertheless, did not allow us to choose the most commodious method of traveling, and my brother is of consequence ill and exhausted. My first business was, indeed, by Claudine's express desire, to seek you: nor was there more than one interest in the world that could have detained me in the pursuit of you. It was precisely that, however, which happened to occur. I met on the way one of my countrymen, from whom I learned some particulars relative to France which I had long most anxiously waited to hear. He referred me for further authentic details to another mutual friend, who was that very morning to set out on his return thither. Not a single moment was to be lost. I drove with all the rapidity I could command to the lodgings of the latter, and was fortunate enough to meet with him. As the situation of our affairs was in all respects alike, the account he gave me of his, left me no reason to doubt the event of my own representations at Paris. I entrusted to him a memorial and other papers I had long since prepared against a similar occasion, and I rely so much both on his zeal, and the justice of my cause, as to assure myself that I shall quickly obtain the proper passports and security. If, in addition to this, I should be happy enough to recover my family property, how joyfully shall I share my affluence with the man who was the friend of my poverty!"

Vaudreuil had spoken so long, that I really began to apprehend he never intended to conclude. He was no talker in general, and therefore I wondered the more at him. But his heart was full of his subject, as I could see in his eyes, and I believe he felt an absolute necessity for thus pouring it out. In spite of my impatience I had not failed, however, at intervals, to be both flattered and touched by his recital: and under any other circumstances no gratification would have been greater perhaps than that of listening to it. I had just then, however, a much greater in view, and I, therefore, hurried him away. I had gathered from the conclusion of his discourse that he was yet ignorant of my uncle's death, and the change it had occasioned in my worldly concerns. This was not surprising; since that I should have become, during his absence, either a guest or even a constant resident in my uncle's house, was among the occurrences of life that might naturally happen. It was now time to explain my situation to him. I could see that he was much struck with it, and felt as though Claudine and himself were suddenly rendered bankrupts both in fortune and in love. But the native dignity and candor of his mind made him quickly recover from the surprise, and he rejoiced in my prosperity.

"Poor St. Victoire!" said he, smiling, as we entered his lodgings: "his pride will not even have the consolation of believing that he is going to take an impoverished man to his bosom!—I was far from being sure that St. Victoire's pride was of so generous a nature: on the contrary I was strongly inclined to suspect that my affluence would be the only consoling circumstance to him under the mortification of having me for a brother-in-law. I made no comment, however, on Vaudreuil's speech; nor indeed had I time. Claudine was before my eyes—she was in my arms: more lovely, as it appeared to me, than ever: for that pure pleasure which springs immediately from the heart embellished her features; her person was in reality improved.—She was grown taller:—her figure, without losing its slightness, was more formed: and she had a decided character of countenance. A scene of the most unalloyed transport succeeded, and it was not immediately that I could recollect myself enough to think at all of St. Victoire. When I did, I was not unmoved by his paleness and apparent depression. His arm was still in bandages, and the loss of blood which he had sustained had altered him very considerably. The ground between us had been rendered perfectly smooth by the kind offices of his brother and sister. We therefore saluted each other with some degree of cordiality; and both studiously avoided all reference to the past. As the house I had lately come into possession of was spacious, I earnestly entreated the whole family to take up their abode there: and this was the more necessary, as the situation of the invalid demanded comforts and an attention he could not so well receive elsewhere.

"It seems only a question whether we shall live with you, or on you, my good friend," said Vaudreuil, perceiving my proposal had given birth to some scruples:—"for my part I think it is very clear which we ought, for our own gratification, to choose." To this decision Claudine and St. Victoire, without much difficulty, acceded. I stayed several hours with them, and then returned home, to give my mother notice of the visitors she was so soon to receive. Her surprise was at first very great. She questioned me abundantly concerning Claudine; and I could easily discover that she secretly regretted my not having chosen an Englishwoman: though, even in that case, I felt that one of her own country would have been still preferable in her eyes; but she was too indulgent and too deeply interested in my happiness to raise any obstacles to my present plans, and on my part I was persuaded that she had only to see the woman I had chosen in order to be convinced no other was so well worthy to be my choice.

Before evening every thing was in readiness to receive our guests. My mother herself accompanied me at a very early hour to fetch the lovely Claudine to that home of which she was soon to become the mistress. My uncle's carriage, as he had been old and infirm, was a conveyance perfectly convenient to St. Victoire, and he arrived at my door without much fatigue.

"It is the fate of our family to be overwhelmed with your bounties, monsieur," said he, as I gave him my arm to mount the stairs.—I thought it was said proudly, too. He was sufficiently a man of the world, however, not to overlook that portion of its goods with which I was surrounded. I saw him eye the apartment we sat in, which had been indeed somewhat expensively furnished by my uncle, and I could fancy I heard him say to himself—"Humph! This then is the house of an English merchant!"—Vaudreuil and Claudine, on the contrary, saw not a mirror or a carpet it contained. That dear girl's spirits soon rose in sympathy with mine, and we became a pair of the most giddy, laughing lovers that can easily be imagined. To look at us, indeed, any body would have supposed we had never known a sorrow or a care: and Vaudreuil, who had hitherto seen nothing in his sister but a pretty pensive young woman, or in me but a somber man of business, was perfectly astonished at the metamorphosis in both. We quickly seduced him, in spite of his habitual seriousness, into a participation of our mirth. And St. Victoire himself, though a little starched at first, yet, before the evening closed, forgot his indisposition, his pride, and his prejudices, and condescended to have more than one hearty laugh along with us. I was very sorry when the hour of parting and repose came. Nevertheless I slept soundly, for I was certain of seeing Claudine again in the morning; and, in return, she has since assured me she never had a more delightful slumber than that she enjoyed under the protection of my roof.

I had judged rightly with respect to my mother: she felt herself the happiest of creatures on being thus suddenly embosomed in a youthful circle, each individual of which looked up for her approving smile to sanction their own. The ingenuousness, the youthful gayety, the sweet playfulness of Claudine's character and manners, completely won her affections, and she soon lived in her sight nearly as much as I did: nor did the former fail to cultivate this tender regard by every office of duty and attention on her part.

Our first business was to make a little establishment for St. Victoire that should ensure the recovery of his health, and then to forward those measures that promised to be favorable for Vaudreuil. We were successful in both instances. The applications made by the latter were approved by the men in power of his own country, and he had very soon the satisfaction of learning that he might return thither without danger—to say the least: but, in fact, he had every reason to believe that he should be reinstated in great part of his rights. This was certainly no music to the ears of St. Victoire: nevertheless it was better than that the whole family should be proscribed; and the generous character of his brother left the count no cause to doubt but he would derive his share of advantage from the return of the former to France. Nice as this business was to settle, Vaudreuil and I contrived to arrange it between us. For, in spite of his political opinions, he was not without a delicate but strong repugnance to the dispossessing an elder branch of the family of his rights in life. As to Claudine, she was out of the question. I was rich enough for both, and I, therefore, lent no ear to any thing that could be said on that subject. She was now, alas! not so ignorant of the real sufferings of poverty as she had been; and this knowledge, which I had at one time so deprecated and earnestly endeavored to shield her from, became in the end an affecting monitor that taught her to feel for others when she ceased to have any thing to feel or fear on that head for herself.

My mourning for my uncle obliged me to postpone my marriage for a short time: it would indeed have been postponed still longer but for the necessity of Vaudreuil's return to France. Both Claudine and myself were solicitous that our union should be sanctioned by the presence of that tender and amiable brother whom we were so soon to lose. How sincerely did we all lament that the tide of human affairs should separate beings united by every principle of affection or intellect!—How gloomy was the consideration that the human race at large, accustomed to blood, should forget in mutual animosity that sacred tie common to all!—Surely it is for the liberal-minded and humane of every nation to counteract the destructive influence of general prejudice, by extending and strengthening, in their private habits, those social feelings which bid man acknowledge his fellow-creature in every quarter of the globe.

On the day preceding that fixed for Vaudreuil's departure, Claudine and I were united. St. Victoire himself bestowed her upon me. I should have been better pleased to have owed the gift, dear as it was, to his brother: but Vaudreuil and I understood each other, and that was enough. A most sorrowful parting succeeded: but it has been the only real chagrin that has clouded my life since my marriage. There are heretics who will smile at this sentence. To such I answer, that I have not yet been married many years; and even if I had—but they will smile again!—There is no curing these sort of people!

My mother, good woman, often looks at us, and observes "that marriages are (according to the old proverb) certainly made in heaven." So also say I! but she, in the simplicity of her heart, draws her conclusions from the extraordinary circumstance that occasioned our meeting;

I, mine, from the still more extraordinary one of our desiring never to part!

St. Victoire has entirely recovered the ill consequences of his wound, and lives at no great distance from us on a pension remitted him by his brother, who has retrieved great part of the family fortune. The former has not yet, however, forgotten his passion for noblesse, and is a little inclined to drop my acquaintance if we happen suddenly to encounter each other in Bond-Street or Pall-Mall. I forgive him: for he keeps the first company, and is a fine man. Vaudreuil's circle is smaller, and he, I am assured, is a very happy one. His happiness, indeed, as well as mine, is of that tranquil nature at which men of the world will wonder. Be it so! I neither envy them their inflamed passions nor sophisticated tastes.

As leisure has served, Claudine, and myself, in company with my mother, have more than once visited our little native spot on the banks of the Clyde. When, in the enjoyment of rural beauty there, we do not fail to commemorate the worthy pastor, our kind and first friend; we talk of his flowers—his bees—and *his sun.* We mutually agree that none ever shone so brightly to our eyes before. We have long since established a correspondence with the good old man, continued by small but grateful offerings on our part; and we sometimes even amuse ourselves with chimerical projects, of presenting to his eyes those fragile but interesting human blossoms, which alone could to us embellish his garden, as they form the chief charm of our own.

THE FRENCHMAN'S TALE.

CONSTANCE.

On the billows of this world sometimes we rise
So dangerously high,
We are to heav'n too nigh:
When, all in rage,
Grown hoary with one minute's age,
The very self-same fickle wave,
Which th' entrancing prospect gave,
Swoll'n to a mountain—sinks into a grave.

"Well, Monsieur Dorsain, I have brought your god-daughter; and a main fine lass she 's grown since last I saw her. Heaven help us! We a' had a deal o' crying on the road—but fair weather 's come at last, you see!"—Such were the words of Antoine, as he stopped his little garden-cart at the door of a small cottage on the confines of the Marquis de Valmont's estate in Languedoc.—"And how does our old dame hold it?" continued he, with the same good-humored loquacity. "And your neighbor Justine; is she as round, and as merry as ever? There's such racketing work at the castle, that a body can never find time to come among you.—I remembered when we used to foot it every evening under yon elms."

Dorsain shook his gray locks.—"That 's as much as to say our dancing days are past?" added Antoine, observing it. "More 's the pity! However, we must leave it to the young ones to supply our place. Come, don't cry, my little maid! Hast buried thy father and mother to be sure; but God Almighty 's a father to all!—Be a good girl! pray to him every morning and night, and I warrant he 'll not forget thee." Honest Antoine accompanied this rustic summary of religion and morality with a hearty salute; shook Dorsain by the hand; and, once more mounting his vehicle, took the path that led him to the great road of the castle.

Let us now turn to his fellow-traveler, whom we have seen consigned with so little ceremony to the care of Dorsain.

It was a female of about six years of age, lovely enough to have passed for one of those cherubs whom the wishes of mortals have figured as mediating spirits between themselves and heaven. Its little rosy and pouting lip seemed designed by nature to call forth a thousand dimples; its bright eyes, blooming cheeks, and forehead of a dazzling whiteness, realized the fancied model of the poet or the painter; while the soft expression of suspended sorrow, and infantine curiosity, which had taken possession of its features, gave them the peculiar charm of interest.

Dorsain, who had thus undertaken a charge which his age and misfortunes might well have rendered burdensome, was no common character. Singular occurrences in life had elevated, and occurrences still more singular depressed it; but they had not deprived him of a just, though uncultivated understanding, a clear and decided judgment, and that sort of dignity which, as it is the result of merit and virtue, may be found in the humblest situation. The small cottage he inhabited with his wife, an infirm, though respectable old woman, made, as we have already said, a part of the extensive domains of the Marquis de Valmont. The marquis was a man—whom it is by no means proper to describe in the same paragraph with Monsieur Dorsain: with the deference due, therefore, to his character, we begin another.

The Marquis de Valmont, it has been said, was a man; let us respect his feelings, and say he was a nobleman: one, who, having somewhat unexpectedly succeeded to the family title, had profited by the privileges it bestowed, to plunge unrestrained into folly and vice. A constant residence at Paris, deep play, expensive mistresses, and an equipage almost princely, had in a very few years considerably impaired a splendid fortune. It was necessary to retrench: but little minds do not correct faults—they only change their complexion; and the marquis grew selfish and oppressive, in proportion as he ceased to be profuse.

At the time that Constantia, for so our young orphan was called, first inhabited the cottage of Dorsain, Monsieur de Valmont was not forty; unprincipled rather than dissolute; still admired in the metropolis; little known on an estate which he was just then quitting, after having visited it for the only time within the course of some years; and blessed in his domestic society with the amiable additions of a conceited wife and a spoiled son.

"This place is detestable," said Madame de Valmont, one day, to her husband—"My son has no tutors here, you have no friends, and I have no health; for Heaven's sake let us return to Paris!" And to Paris they went.

What did the marquis and his son find there? Why, any thing but tutors or friends: the marchioness was the only one of the three that was successful; not that she found health, for to say the truth, she did not at that time want it; but she certainly found a cure for all complaints, both real and imaginary, by being deposited, within less than five years, under a very magnificent monument in the church of St. Genevieve. The marquis put on his sables in the most becoming taste—for he was still handsome. The young chevalier also made his arrangements; for he had profited enough by his mother's instructions, and the society in which he lived, to think of commencing *petit-maître* at least. Four years more threw some new traits in his character, and finished his education: at the expiration of which both father and son, from political reasons, prevailed on themselves, with half a dozen friends, to revisit the long-forgotten castle of Valmont.

And what is become of Constance?—Nine years are past—nine long years in about as many lines. This is going full speed indeed! Patience, courteous reader! The ensuing years will, perhaps, creep a snail's pace. Nature had not forgotten Constance, nor have we. Tall beyond her age, pure and lovely as the flowers it was her business to tend—light of heart, and graceful of form, Constance saw her fifteenth year without having once ceased to be the playful, unconscious character she had first been set down at the cottage of Dorsain. She had made rapid strides too in her education; she wrote tolerably—read at least as well as Monsieur le Curé—understood the whole management of a garden—danced like a fairy—could rear young birds, and spin *à merveille.* Let us not dissemble her foibles; she loved the flowers and the birds better than the spinning-wheel; and Dorsain, who indulged her with the two first, much better than his wife, who would willingly have confined her to the last.

"What a shame yonder pretty cot should be suffered to go to ruin!" exclaimed Constance, as she was one day walking with Dorsain—"Ah, father!" for so she always called him, "if you and I had the management of it, we would bind up those honeysuckles that now hang so neglected. Look, how the jessamine has even forced its way through that broken shutter! The inside of the casement I dare say is covered with flowers. Well, great folks are much to be pitied!"

"Why?" said Dorsain, with an absent air, and fixing his eyes on the cottage with a profound sigh.

"Because they so seldom know how to enjoy the charming places they possess. There is monseigneur, for example——"

"Let us not talk of him," interrupted Dorsain, warmly. A servant in the marquis's livery at that moment crossed the path.

"Good day, Monsieur Dorsain—Good day, mademoiselle! We are like to have a busy time of it—My lord is coming down with a power of gentry to stay six whole weeks at the castle. The *avant-courier* is just arrived; and our old *concierge* in no small bustle with the preparations."—Dorsain fixed his eyes on Constance, who, busy with the wilderness of sweets her imagination was reducing to order, attended but little to what was said either of my lord or his guests. The cottage indeed she had seen before—but she happened now for the first time to view it under the full blaze of a summer's sun; a summer, too, so unusually luxuriant as to have made the whole country round a garden. That which adjoined to the building in question had once been extensive and beautiful: the clustered trees, shot up into strength and wildness, had gained in foliage what they had lost in regular grace, and presented a welcome retreat from the sun; while the shrubs and flowers blew under them with a profusion so excessive as seemed to mock the hand of culture. "One might be so happy in that cottage!" sighed the little *protegée* of Dorsain softly to herself as she went home—and this was the first time that imagination had ever presented to her those shadowy forms of uncreated pleasure, of which not even that can trace the outline.

Her days, however, passed not now so pleasantly as before; the vicinity of the marquis inducing her venerable protectors to confine her almost constantly to the house. She had, indeed, never been accustomed to mingle with the peasantry of the neighborhood, who, from jealousy, or some other unaccountable motive, kept at a distance from the cottage of Dorsain; but still she had been sometimes permitted to walk to the next village, under his care, and sometimes to dance there upon the green. But the character of the marquis was bad enough; that of the chevalier report announced to be still worse—for he was, in fact, less a hypocrite; and both were, by the avowal of all who visited the cottage of Dorsain, bold, dissolute, and haughty. Beings like these were to be dreaded, and therefore to be shunned. Alas! there was still another danger: nor did it escape the attention of Madame Dorsain, that the companions of the chevalier might be some of them more engaging than himself.

Constance, however, foresaw nothing of all this; she was heedless and lively. Well, well, "reflection will come with time!" So say the philosophers of all ages—and so said the tenants of Monsieur de Valmont. Time came; but he certainly forgot the predictions of the philosophers, or took a malicious pleasure in falsifying them; for he neglected to bring reflection in his hand; and to this neglect only is to be imputed the error of Constance, who, weary of perpetual confinement, made it a practice to rise with the sun, and enjoy his earliest beams in the garden of that very cottage we have seen her admire. The spot, independent of its general claims, inspired a particular interest. It contained—not a lover, but a bird's nest. Wandering there one morning, she had nearly crushed with her foot a young and unfledged linnet that some accident had dislodged. Anxiously had she sought the brood, and most carefully had replaced the little stray. It is so natural to love what we have served! Constance visited her nursery every day with new delight. The parent bird from home, she would venture to caress her *protegée*, place it in her bosom, and seem willing to communicate to it the tender warmth of her heart.

The sun shone brightly, and the morning dew sparkled to his beams: such was the employment, and such the feelings of Constance, as she bent towards her favorite a cheek glowing with beauty, and half concealed by the ringlets which her attitude threw over it, when a slight noise in the bushes adjoining induced her to look up: it was caused by a young man of no ungraceful appearance, who, with a gun in his hand, stood on a bank that commanded the garden, and was earnestly gazing at her; the fine tinge of youth instantly brightened into a blush that gave her new charms. The stranger saw he was observed, and, pulling off his hat, addressed to her some common salutations; to which she was about to reply, when the report of a gun caused her to start, and retreat some paces back. The young man, who mistook the cause of her flight, which was in fact much less fear of the gun than that of being further seen either by him, or some of the marquis's guests, lightly sprung over the fence by which they were separated, and endeavored to reassure her. One versed in the world would, perhaps, have found somewhat in the tone with which this was done, that might have alarmed suspicion, and offended pride: but to both of these Constance was as much a stranger as to deceit; and she answered his inquiries, therefore, by an ingenuons avowal of the real source of her terror.

"And what is there in the marquis, or his guests, that should make you fear their approach?" said the stranger, with a smile.

"Their haughtiness—their arrogance! Oh, if you were but to hear half the stories that are related of them in our cottage!"——

The stranger smiled again. Scandal he saw was not confined to great towns; it reigned powerfully enough at Valmont, to attribute to all its inhabitants the vices of their lord.

"Is that then your cottage!" returned he, with some impatience. Constance now smiled in her turn: how could she possibly avoid it? The young man had to all appearance the finest and most intelligent eyes in the world; yet it was plain he made no use of them, when he could suppose she lived under a roof that looked the image of beautiful desolation. Somewhat of this was perhaps, unconsciously, conveyed in her answer—and the reply?—Why what it was exactly *we* can not tell; but it is highly probable that Constance could; for her ear had certainly acquired a retentive power that she had never observed in it before—till recollecting she had often learnt a favorite tune merely by once or twice hearing it: "It is with voices as with musical airs," thought Constance suddenly, "we unintentionally remember some, and forget others.—Painting is doubtless a gift of the same nature:—why may I not have a taste for that too, since I have often been told that I have one for music? If I may judge from my feelings, I am sure I have both. Ah, how much may we profit by a little reflection!—Madame Dorsain has told me so a thousand times. Well! I will improve: from this moment I will reflect on every object I see!" And so saying she fell into a deep reverie upon the only object that she saw no longer. Without being inspired, however, by those feelings which had thus suddenly taught Constance that she was both a painter and musician, we will endeavor to give a sketch with probably more likeness in it than her newly-acquired talent could afford.

Sparkling eyes, an animated and intelligent countenance, a form that appeared more naturally graceful than artificially polished, an address, familiar without impertinence, and prepossessing without study,—such were the external advantages with which Constance's new acquaintance was endowed. But alas! though nature was so liberal, fortune seemed to have forgotten him: for while the Chevalier de Valmont enjoyed, as it should seem, without deserving them, every gift of the latter, the former had taken pleasure in scattering her favors upon one, who, by his own confession, boasted no higher rank than being of the marquis's household. A discovery, however, that pride rendered painful to him who made it, conveyed no wound to the bosom of Constance; happily ignorant of those refinements which teach us to annex consequence to situation, and to blush at paying to nature the dues she alone has a right to demand. Valrive, nevertheless, whose ideas had been formed in a far different school, made not this avowal without a degree of anxiety, which slowly subsided when he perceived that this creature, so naturally polished, so intelligently beautiful, was yet so little conscious of her pretensions, as to regard the attendant of M. de Valmont with no inconsiderable degree of respect.

We left Constance in a reverie. We might write a good many pages, and find her there still, I am afraid, had she not unexpectedly found herself at home: but spiritless, tired, and for the first time ungrateful to honest Antoine, who had walked from the chateau with a basket of fruit and flowers, and was communicating the news of the family.

"Come hither, child," said Madame Dorsain, as she advanced: "see what a nosegay our good neighbor has brought us! Here is an employment for you that you like!" Constance, without reply, set herself to dress the flower-jars; and never before were they so ill-dressed; yet, amid the profusion of sweets she heedlessly scattered, her own fair and blooming form might well have been mistaken for that of Flora herself.

Antoine, who, though old, had not lost the use of his eyes, and who was, besides, somewhat elevated with the hospitable glass that had just been pressed upon him, soon grew most eloquent in her praise.

"Your pretty god-daughter, neighbor Dorsain," said he, "grows too tall and womanly to stay here. Not but you have had enough of marquises and great folks, I trow, to keep her out of *their* way; and between you and I, our gentry do n't care much, I believe, to come in yours: but, heaven help us! the very servants, now-a-days, are enough to turn one's head.—There 's your fine Monsieur Valrive now, aping his lord, and strutting about as though he were a lord himself."

Constance, who had hitherto been inattentive to the discourse, at the name of Valrive blushed deeper than the roses she held, and became all ear.

"They say," added Antoine, "that he has made a campaign with the chevalier: 'twas there, I suppose, he got that scar that wins all the girls' hearts. More fool they! 'Tis not always the best head-pieces that get themselves in or out of a scrape.—Why, 'twas but yesterday he 'd have persuaded me not to clip my trees, because your English gardens are all the fashion at Paris—a fine fellow indeed to teach me!—He has seen more rogueries than battles, I believe, or he would never have stood so well both with my old and young lord."

Constance had heard but too much: Valrive, before only handsome, had now acquired the charm of interest.

He was brave—he had been wounded—he was even scarred. To all that concerned either the wound or the scar, his young acquaintance could have listened for ages: but Antoine had already exhausted that little all in his momentary fit of spleen, and of an hour's long discourse besides, Constance heard nothing.

"If he should chance to visit the garden again!" said she, as with an uncertain step she advanced towards it two mornings after; and while saying so, she fixed her eyes full upon him. Upon *him?*—ah, no! upon a form ten thousand times more winning than that which at first accidentally engaged them—a form over which prepossession had already scattered charms unknown to sober reality. Both the manners and countenance of Valrive, indeed, far from being improved, betrayed an embarrassment that took somewhat from his natural grace.—In seeing Constance once more appear, he had instantaneously conceived ideas and hopes which the sweet ingenuousness of her language immediately dispelled. She was too artless not to betray that she met him with pleasure, and too innocent not to prove that she did it without mistrust. Afraid to inspire that jealous sense of decorum of which she seemed so wholly unconscious, yet, hitherto, unversed in the language of delicate love, he viewed her with a mixture of tender admiration and surprise, that insensibly tinctured his mind with a passsion to which it had yet been a stranger.

But an innocent heart, first awakened to sensibility, needs no better instructor in decorum: and it was from her own, not his, that Constance began to suspect she ought to meet him no more.

This idea, essential as it might be to her future good, was productive at the moment of nothing but evil; for it insensibly led her to prolong her stay much beyond her usual hour.—The burning sun gave her notice of the oversight; and she was returning homewards with feverish perturbation and haste, when, at the moment of crossing an open lane that interposed between a thicket of wild limes and horse-chestnuts, she heard the sound of loud voices, and as suddenly perceived a party of horsemen, who were advancing almost full speed from the brow of a gentle declivity. It was too late to retreat; but in the eagerness of advancing she struck her ankle against the root of a tree, and, overcome at once with trepidation and acute pain, sunk to the ground. The foremost of the party, who was now very near, sprung from his horse; and, on perceiving she was young and handsome, raised her in his arms with an exclamation of mingled surprise and curiosity. The whole group instantly collected around her: their eager inquiries—their free and licentious expressions of admiration—the confused sound of their voices, and the passionate looks of the young man who held her, inspired Constance both with distrust and alarm. In vain did she protest that she felt no inconvenience from her accident—that she was able to walk home without assistance. No credit was given to the assertion, as indeed it deserved none; and they eagerly disputed with each other which of them should have the pleasure of carrying, or at least of assisting her to the cottage.

"And where, my dear, is your home?" said one of the party, who had surveyed her for some time in silence. Constance just raised her eyes to the speaker:—his years, the gracefulness of his person, and the tempered haughtiness of his manners, at once impressed her with a conviction that he was the marquis. The young man who still held her was doubtless his son; and she saw herself in one luckless moment plunged into that circle Dorsain had so anxiously guarded her against. Nor was this all: that venerable and gentle old man, who had hitherto treated her with so much indulgence, received her from the hands of the gay group with astonishment; and seemed to see in her nothing but a criminal, whom he knew not whether to upbraid or weep over.

"You have been guilty of a most dangerous imprudence!" said he, as he left her to repose in a solitary chamber over that in which they generally sat—"Recover your spirits, however;—remove the pain by proper applications, and all may be well again!"

Alas! Constance thought otherwise.—There was a pain in her heart which she vainly strove to subdue; and while the events of the last hour, perverse as they had been, faded insensibly from her memory, the preceding ones were deeply engraved there.

That night, and the next morning, passed in restlessness and sufferings; when, after having been disturbed by various voices that succeeded each other, she saw Madame Dorsain enter her chamber.

"My husband was right," said she, dropping tears as she spoke: "This is no longer any place for you, Constance. We have had gentry of all descriptions to inquire after you. Neither the marquis nor the chevalier, indeed, have been here; but *that* Valrive, who is the confidant, of one or both, I suppose, has done nothing but ask impertinent and troublesome questions. Dry up your eyes, however, my dear Constance!" added she with tenderness, on perceiving the tears that flowed from them, "we have yet some friends in Dauphiné, to whom, in a few days, we will find means of conveying thee. M. Thuriot is a good man, and an honest apothecary; he will receive thee kindly for our sakes, and for the sake of those who are gone!—Be comforted, my child, there is a Providence that will protect thee!"

Like many other honest people, Madame Dorsain did not perceive that she was comforting herself instead of the person she talked to; who, indeed, so far from being consoled, felt the bitterest mortification at not having seen Valrive, and at having missed in his sympathy the only possible pleasure which chagrin and indisposition would have allowed her to taste.

"He will, doubtless, come again," said she, as she tried to sleep for the night; "and to-morrow, sick or well, I will be below." Anxiety and pain, however, kept her waking till sunrise; and from that time, till it had been many hours above the horizon, a soft and balmy slumber sealed up her eyes. The deep tones of a man's voice, as they penetrated the thin ceiling under her, first opened them.

"Ah, it is Valrive!" said she, starting up, and hastily beginning to dress herself. Not at all. It was Antoine, on the contrary, who, in a tone of much more importance and gravity than was natural to him, was detailing a long story to Dorsain. She listened attentively, but could distinguish nothing except the names of the chevalier, the marquis, and Valrive, till, the conversation growing apparently less interesting, the naturally noisy and loquacious Antoine insensibly raised his voice to a pitch that permitted her to hear the whole arrangement of her journey to Dauphiné.

This cruel blow completed all that had passed. To Dauphiné she must go, however unwillingly, if desired; and in Dauphiné she had no probability of ever meeting Valrive again. Yet to meet him again was so much the first wish of her heart, that it might well be deemed her only one; and, after many struggles, she at length determined to risk seeing him once more on the very spot where they had parted. A thousand doubts, however, the cruel offspring of passion, now harassed her mind. He might not be there. If there, he might think lightly of *her* for seeking an interview, or oblige her to think lightly of him by a mode of conduct she could not approve. Of these doubts one only was verified. Valrive, assuredly, was not there; for, in truth, she met him pensively walking in the path between their former rendezvous and the cottage of Dorsain.

"Ah! are you here?" said she faintly, blushing.

"Where should I be, dearest Constance!" cried he, eagerly flying to meet her, "but on that only spot where I could hope to see you? How much did I suffer on the knowledge of your accident?"

"And how indiscreetly," returned Constance, "did you address your inquiries! Do you know that your visit will be the cause of sending me out of the province?"

It was now Valrive's turn to blush.——"That visit," said he, hesitating and looking down, "was not the effect of choice, but of situation—Blame not me, therefore, dearest Constance! who have suffered far more than yourself in the recollection that you have been seen——Yes," continued he, after a break, "you have been seen with that admiration you must ever inspire. Your situation from the very moment became critical—nay, dangerous; and mine, unfortunately, is such that I can not protect you."

"How can I be in any danger," said she, innocently, "from those for whom I feel no regard?"

"Dear, adorable girl!" said Valrive, tenderly kissing her hands, "how does my heart venerate that pure one which dreams not of allurement but from its own affections! But there are gross and corrupted minds, my Constance, capable of laying other snares than for your sensibility."

"I should dread the one snare much less than the other," said Constance, with the same unaffected candor. —Valrive looked conscience-struck.

"The first would surely most offend," said he.

"But I should be most grieved by the last," again returned Constance.

"Woe to the man who shall either offend or grieve a mind so pure!" exclaimed Valrive, with enthusiasm. "There is a guardian innocence about thee, dearest Constance! that demands no other protector against those who aspire to thy affections.—But you are yet feeble; nor dare I detain you longer—Promise, however, to meet me here, at least once again."

Constance interrupted him, to recount the plan of her intended journey. "I can not," said she, "venture abroad again to-morrow morning, lest I should incur suspicion, and be hurried off abruptly.——On the morning after———"

"How unfortunate!" cried Valrive. "The morning after is a national festival. The marquis entertains his tenants, and my situation obliges me to preside. Their zeal, it is more than probable, will lead them to the chateau at an early hour, nor dare I venture to absent myself. Yet I have one plan," added he, with the eagerness of sudden recollection, "that promises us security. The chevalier, in his rides, has seen this cottage you so much admire, and given orders to have it refitted. I am entrusted with the directions and the key—to you I make over this deposit, and entreat you to meet me there a little before sunset on the evening of that day.—The tenants and domestics will be engaged in dancing on the green, and my absence may for a time pass unnoticed."

Constance started at this proposal. Though yet ignorant of the forms of life, a painful sense of impropriety flashed across her mind, and betrayed itself on her countenance. Valrive, who perceived its effects, used all his eloquence to obviate them. Of eloquence, indeed, nature had given him no inconsiderable portion; and his fair auditor slowly suffered herself to be persuaded.

The promise and the key were mutually interchanged. Valrive leaped the fence, and Constance advanced homewards. She was not, however, ten yards from the spot on which they had conversed, when a rustling among the trees engaged her attention. She turned her head, and a man, who seemed passing through the walks by accident, slightly saluted her. He was tall, and of a daring cast of countenance; but as he pursued not the same path with herself, she paid him little attention; and, engrossed by her own reflections, eagerly pressed forward.

That day, and the next, passed in mysterious conferences between Dorsain and his wife, from which she was excluded: Yet did each direct to her by turns the sad and tender gaze that age so often fixes on unconscious youth, when the fearful images of the past crowd forward, and cast their giant shadows over futurity. On the present *now*, however, seemed to rest the existence of Constance, as on the evening of her appointment she surveyed the sweet cot she was about to enter. The dews already began to exhale a more exquisite odor from every flower; and the foliage, almost transparent with the setting sun, sheltered a thousand birds, whose cheerful notes bade him a grateful adieu. Lively and animated nature seemed to breathe without, and contrasted the profound stillness that reigned within.

Through the lower apartments, where half-broken shutters admitted only an indistinct light, she passed to those above. They appeared to have been once the seat of elegance and happiness, such as the reposing mind finds delight in imaging. Curiosity insensibly swelled into interest, and the little heart of Constance paused on the scene before her with the same feeling that rivets the eye upon a new-made grave.

The chairs and curtains were of green taffeta, elegantly fringed, though faded by time. A musical instrument, crayons, and rough drawings, all, like the hand possibly that once guided them, moldering into dust, by turns arrested her attention. She touched the instrument; and its discordant tone, as it rang through the house, first reminded her she was alone. She listened—paused—looked through the window for Valrive, and, perceiving no traces of 'him, passed to the adjoining room, which, commanding an eastern aspect, was already *somber* with the gray tinge of evening. The recess in which the bed stood was half shaded by a festoon curtain, the cords of which were broken, and hung down with an air of disorder that indeed pervaded every thing around. Stands for flowers were fixed on each side of the dressing-table; and amidst its ornaments, carefully folded in paper, she discovered a quantity of rich auburn hair, the long locks of which had doubtless been treasured as a sad memento to some heart that had now ceased to throb over it.

Is it the insignia of death that is most touching?—Ah no!—It is the melancholy memorial of life;—the painful vacuum—the affecting desolation of a scene that presents every dear and familiar object, except that which once vivified and embellished all!

Depressed by a sensibility that was not unmixed with awe, and alarmed by the increasing obscurity, Constance began to give up all hope of seeing Valrive, and thought only of retiring unobserved, and of fastening the cottage door. With an impression of terror that she had never before felt, she found the door already fast, and the key no longer there. That it was left in the lock on her entrance she perfectly recollected, as well as that she had no otherwise closed the door than by a rustic latch which she had thought it prudent to drop. Locked, it now undoubtedly was; and whether by a hand within or without the house she dared hardly venture to examine. The name of Valrive, faintly articulated, expressed a timid hope that he might have entered; but no voice, no step, was heard to answer—the same pensive stillness continued to reign around—and the silence of the birds, who retired with the retiring sun, seemed to close up every thing in solitude and gloom. Far as her eye could trace, did Constance explore through the casement which commanded the garden. From the chamber window nothing could be seen but the thick and interwoven trees of an adjoining copse, that spread their long shade over a reedy pool, from both of which the cottage was divided by a road.

Terror, which at first had arrested her footsteps, now pressed the idea of the future so forcibly, that she wandered in breathless expectation over the house, to find some outlet by which she might quit it. A sudden and indistinct noise engaged her attention. Her heart told her it was Valrive, and she flew to the front: but from thence the sound came not; and she was slowly returning, when a door, that led from the other side of the building, shook with the evening blast upon its hinges, and seemed to require only a very feeble effort to open it. Even that, however, was unnecessary; for it was opened at the same moment by two men, who, rushing from the narrow road, attempted to stop her mouth. But terror rendered that needless; for she sunk insensible in their arms. The rapid motion of a carriage restored her to recollection, and the name of Valrive, faintly, and involuntarily, issued from her lips.

"He is not here at present, ma'm'selle," said the ill-looking man who sat by her—for the other had taken him the office of postillion—"but have patience, you will see him very soon, I do n't doubt."

"*See* him!" repeated Constance, in astonishment, "see him!—Ah, it is not possible he should be a *principal* in a scheme like this!—and an instrument—Oh heaven!"—

To vague and painful surmises, that rested on her lover, only because there was no other being on whom they *could* rest, the surly ruffian who watched her returned no answer. The carriage continued to move with some velocity; nor was it till night was advancing that they stopped at a remote cottage, whence issued an old woman of no very prepossessing appearance, whom one of her conductors saluted as his mother. Through the window of the miserable chamber assigned her Constance beheld, with a mixture of more than common apprehension, the blaze of distant fires; and was disturbed by shouts that by turns rose and died upon the wind. From the only slumber she had known she started suddenly at the gray dawn of morning, roused by a chorus that seemed to burst from beneath, in which the screams of women, the shrill tones of childhood, and the hoarse rough voices of men, were discordantly blended—tumultuous talking ensued, and all then was silent. While fear still throbbed over her frame, the carriage wheels were heard, and her conductors appeared at the door. Their manners were not less surly than before; and, as she cast a fearful glance round on quitting the cottage, she observed that each wore a tri-colored ribbon in his hat.

Constance was not to learn, that in France there were proud men who oppressed, and desperate ones who resisted. Among the peasants of the district, and even upon the estate of the Marquis de Valmont, the scenes transacting in Paris had long been a theme of wonder and admiration; and Dorsain, who had groaned under the iron hand of aristocracy, listened with no ungracious ear to the story of its downfall. The young heart of Constance had early learnt to beat in unison with the hearts of all the wise and good, at the idea that every man should in future repose under his own vine, without fearing that the rude gripe of despotism should tear away its fruits. Alas! the wise and good were far from foreseeing, that, while corruption was sapping the foundation of morality, a mad rabble would beat down the superstructure, and that nothing was to remain visible but a hideous mass of ruin.

It was not till the evening of the second day's journey that Constance discovered it was to terminate at a chateau, too proudly magnificent, even in decay, to leave her a doubt of its owner. It *was* then to the marquis that she was a victim, and it was by Valrive she had been delivered up. That servile licentiousness, with which she had heard him taxed, was now proved. The people around her did not even dissemble; and his name, eternally united with that of his lord in every direction concerning her, inspired hourly a regret that became almost insupportable, when she recollected all that her venerable protectors would suffer in her absence. To this regret, for some days, she wholly abandoned herself: childish impatience, and unavailing tears, were her only returns for the domestic attentions of an old woman, in whose charge she appeared to be placed, and whose manners, if coarse, were not offensive; though her blunted faculties, and habitual torpidity, left nothing to be expected from her feelings. Of the golden hopes that might have enlivened them, Constance had none to offer. She was herself indigent and obscure—had no friends to protect her, no wealth to bestow. For the grief she felt on being thus torn from her relatives, she could awaken a very small portion of sympathy in one accustomed to vegetative existence; and for the evils she dreaded, she vainly strove to excite any. But the mind, thus compressed within a narrow circle, only proves its elasticity;

that sun, whose parting beams she commanded from her chamber, and whose lingering light she delighted to trace, often left her in a state of abstraction, which insensibly matured her intellectual faculties. Adjoining to her apartment was another filled with books. Curiosity led her to examine them—they were covered with dust, but it was indeed the sacred dust of learning and genius, whole treasures of which were buried beneath it: yet did she open upon them with indifference; for she was yet ignorant of the charm of reading;—that enchanting pleasure, that innocent voluptuousness—that atmosphere in which the half-fledged faculties delight to try their little wings, and soar into a region that grosser spirits know not!

This study soon took .possession of her heart, and insensibly meliorated feelings it could not subdue. To her astonishment, three months elapsed without bringing either the marquis or Valrive—three months of uniform solitude and confinement, for which she knew not how to account; when the castle bell, which rang long and loud one evening, gave the unusual signal of a guest. The heart of Constance sunk at the sound, which, reverberating through the halls, and increased by the general stillness, spread far around, till it sullenly died away upon the cold blasts of autumn.

Her hours of negative tranquillity now vanished at once. Monsieur de Valmont—for it was he himself who arrived—arrogant, haughty, and observing, inspired terrors which, while they were remote, she barely guessed at. Hardly deigning to listen to her, with eyes that wildly ran over her person, he yet lifted from it eager glances of curiosity and astonishment, when roused by some energy of expression which his ideas of her rustic education had left him unprepared for. Those licentious wishes, which might naturally be deemed the motives for his carrying her off, only betrayed themselves as the habit of his character, not as impelling him to any particular pursuit: and every day, as it called forth the latent powers of *her* mind, awakened in his a perturbation other painful events alone superseded. Insensibly he learned to speak, as well as to listen. The letters he daily received, the distracting variety of emotions they occasioned, and the insupportable restraint he labored under with every one besides, induced him, by starts, to betray all that the pride of aristocracy, and the dread of humiliation, made him secretly groan under. Immured in the bosom of a remote chateau, on the shores of the Mediterranean, Constance became informed of the terrible scenes that were passing in the metropolis. The Marquis de Valmout, secretly trembling at his own vassals, self-imprisoned on an obscure estate, while the more virtuous, or more wise, among his dependents, were endeavoring to save his lands from pillage, and his person from insult, formed but a very small and inconsiderable part of the vast picture now presented to her view. She shuddered over the wounds of humanity: she turned from them to her own individual sufferings with that still more painful and acute interest *self* always inspires. Immersed as the mind of Monsieur de Valmont appeared in political considerations, yet there were moments when his familiarity shocked, and his insolence alarmed her. To escape became the constant object of all her thoughts. Once beyond the walls of the chateau, she doubted not of protection—nay, within them, could it have been possible to gain access to the train of servants that now filled it, she hoped to discover some generous heart that would find power to shelter her. Valrive she knew to be at Paris. Through him those communications reached the marquis, that stole the color from his cheek, and shot cold thrills through his frame. The young chevalier was there too;

and she had no difficulty in perceiving, that, in addition to the storm of public calamity which seemed ready to tear up the lineal honors of his house, Valmont groaned under the pressure of family dissension. The democratic principles of his son had inspired him with a horror little short of aversion; and it was rather to Valrive, than to that son, he committed the care of his safety, and the protection of his rights.

That Valrive had been an instrument in betraying her Constance had long ceased to think. The tone of bitter *persiflage*, with which the marquis had questioned her concerning him, the inquisitive and earnest gaze he had fixed upon her while he spoke, and the circumstance of his keeping him at Paris, all conspired to convince her that she might expect every protection from a lover whose fidelity to his lord gave so honorable a testimony to his character.

The fortunate moment for accelerating her escape seemed at length to arrive.—In taking out some books, she accidentally brushed down a key; it had two wards, which, though rusted by time, appeared curious; and on applying it to the locks of the various closets, with which her old-fashioned apartment abounded, she discovered it to be a master-key. This was indeed a discovery! Nor was it the only one: a stream of light, that issued through a crevice whence she had removed the books, soon led her to perceive a door behind them, to which her new-found treasure belonged. Breathless with joy and trepidation, she only ventured to try the lock, and, perceiving it opened outwards, carefully concealed the key till some more secure opportunity of using it. Such an opportunity was not indeed easily found.—The hour of rest was the only one on which she could depend; and as she judged her apartment to be at no great distance from the hall of entrance, she was willing to try that part of the chateau of which she had some recollection, rather than open a door that appeared to have been long closed.

The slow and heavy clock of the castle struck eleven before the footsteps of the servants ceased to jar through the galleries. To meet with *one* she indeed desired; but the risk of discovery she feared might increase were the number extended: for, where each was suspicious of the other, each might be willing to prove his duty to his lord by betraying her. The silence that prevailed at length gave her courage; and cautiously introducing her key into the lock of her apartment, she had the satisfaction to hear that which had been left in it on the opposite side fall to the ground. The door opened at her touch; and the light-hearted Constance half breathed out in joyful and imperfect accents—"I am free!"—What, however, was her freedom? In truth, she looked before her, and hardly knew. The taper she held cast a faint and uncertain light upon a spacious staircase, the sides of which, once magnificently painted with groups of fabulous divinities, retained only imperfect and pale outlines of figures as large, or even larger, than the life. Though somewhat startled, she had the courage to proceed; and, sheltering the light with her hand, she descended the first flight of stairs. To the great hall of entrance she was indeed much nearer than she even suspected; for, from the balustrade of a square gallery, into which she now entered, she looked immediately upon it—a view, however, that by no means encouraged any nearer advance; since, had it been peopled by the marquis and his servants, she would hardly have felt a less pleasant sensation than presented itself at the cold groups of marble with which the taste of different owners had enriched it. Maimed and gigantic figures, some of them exquisite productions of sculpture, others less remarkable for beauty than antiquity, seemed starting with wild and distorted attitudes—not into life, for *that* idea their color precluded, but into preternatural animation. Involuntarily she drew back at the view; and striking at the same moment against somewhat that stood near, the clank of steel rang low and dismally upon her ear. Her blood chilled; and casting her eyes around, she perceived that the gallery in which she stood was hung with vast coats of mail, the work of different centuries; various in form, and presenting, in the long protruded lance, the short sharp spear, and the weighty battle-axe, all the savage stratagems of military prowess.—A fear, however, more immediate and more certain, than any this view excited, occurred at the same moment, when a bell sounded below, and the door opened of a distant apartment. It was too plain she had erred in supposing the family were at rest. Valmont in a nightgown, a candle in his hand, and passing, as it should seem to his chamber, advanced directly towards the gallery. Hardly had she time to extinguish her light, ere he was near enough to have seen it. The trophy she stood near partly shaded her, yet her dress caught the eye of the marquis. It was white: her hair hung loose over her shoulders; nor was the marble she had been viewing more deathlike than terror had rendered her cheek. She lifted her hand in the attitude of supplication. It was unnecessary. He distinguished not the features; but the form—the outline—some horrible recollection that night and fancy aided, at once struck upon the soul of Valmont, and he sunk lifeless to the earth. Hardly alive herself, Constance had just time and courage to snatch the taper he had dropped, nearly extinguished in its fall, and, leaving it burning, to hasten by its uncertain light to her chamber; where, locking the door, she concealed the invaluable key in her bosom, and threw herself into bed. Imperfect but mingled voices quickly assured her that the valet of the marquis, summoned previously by his bell, had alarmed the household. Silence at length succeeded.—Constance counted the long hours of darkness—nor till encouraged by the return of morn did she close her eyes in sleep.

To discover what had passed was now the great aim of her curiosity. Nor was it difficult to do so. "That monseigneur had seen the ghost; had had a fit in consequence, and still remained indisposed," was intelligence of such magnitude, as even to unbind the frozen faculties of her old attendant. That Valmont believed, indeed, from some infirmity of constitution, that he had seen *a* ghost, she hardly doubted; but who was *the* ghost with whom his household seemed so well acquainted?—She made the inquiry, and was herself somewhat surprised to hear it was that of a woman; a former Marchioness de Valmont, who, clothed in white, had long wandered over all parts of the chateau, but more especially inhabited *one;* which, indeed, complaisance to so unwelcome a visitant had induced all the rest of the family to abandon.

Valmont, however, was ill—really ill; and while he confined himself to his chamber, she had opportunity to explore some less public outlet to escape by than that of passing through the hall and the court. The futility of the marquis's fears she well knew: and though they so far affected her own mind as to determine her against a nocturnal expedition, she had no hesitation in attempting any other.

The hour, therefore, on which she now fixed to execute her project was when the servants were at dinner: a ceremony which, as it immediately succeeded to that of their lord, secured her, during his indisposition, from the visits of either. With an anxious heart did she await the bell by which this hour was announced; and no sooner did its noisy discord cease, than she opened the secret door, of which she had before only tried the lock. It presented to her view a long and gloomy corridor, where high circular windows admitted only a dim light; nor did the season of the year afford a very brilliant one at the best. Some portraits remained on the walls, either torn or defaced, and the discolored wainscoting between them showed that others had been removed.

"I wonder if any body ever admired those frightful figures," thought Constance, as she hastily cast her eye over them, and then, with a piercing glance, directed it forward. It is probable that the story of the lady in white occurred to her: but she had known too little of danger to be much accustomed to fear; nor has the human mind capacity to retain two sentiments equally forcible. Love and liberty floated before her imagination; and the terrors that superstition might have kindled insensibly faded. With a light step did she trip across the gallery. Two doors presented themselves at the extremity—she hesitated—and at length turned towards the left. "What a charming place is a cottage!" again silently thought our little *paysanne*, as the key with difficulty turned in the massy lock. The door creaked on its hinges. She half started—it was but half. She smiled at her own fears—yet fear she did; and wistfully cast her eyes on a narrow and winding stair-case, of which, with some tremor, she reached the top. What was her disappointment to find herself in the gallery of a chapel, the dreary and desolate appearance of which denoted it to have long seen no other congregation than that of rats, whose devastations were indeed sufficiently obvious in the rotten beams and worm-eaten chairs! From the window at one end, obscure as it was with dust, and covered with ivy, she commanded no very narrow view; but it was of a flat and pathless greensward, interrupted only by clumps of firs, and terminating, as it approached the coast, in a barren sand. The opposite window looked into the court of the castle; a court which so seldom opened its inhospitable gates, that the untrodden grass grew high and rank amid the stones. From hence, had she been discerned by any of the domestics, she could form no hope of relief; or indeed any hope but that of being mistaken for the supernatural appearance she had heard described. Anger and disappointment banished every other recollection. She impatiently descended the stairs, and as impatiently opened the door she had before neglected. From a narrow passage, which she was to enter down a flight of steps, the close, pent-up air struck upon her a damp and chilling blast. Its influence communicated to her heart. A nameless dread seemed at once to fall upon her. Cold dews started on her brow, and a universal tremor took possession of her frame. Yet impelled by shame, by hope, perhaps even by the fear of returning, she had crept more than half way through the passage, when a sound, real or imaginary—a low and melancholy moan, seemed to creep along the walls. On the ground sank the terrified Constance, hiding her face with her hands, and pouring out a vehement ejaculation to the Being who alone could protect her. A long and profound silence succeeded. Constance continued to pray: and can the prayers of the innocent and the pious be breathed in vain? Speak, ye who have ever known what it was to pour out your souls to your Creator through the sweet channels of confidence and adoration!

Constance arose, and looked round her. Her mind had lost half its weakness, and the place consequently half its gloom. She believed herself sure of having passed the desolate angle of the castle, and began to hope, that, if she had indeed heard any noise, it was the distant echo of some servant's foot that resounded through the offices. The apartment that presented itself was not ill calculated to confirm this idea: it had indeed no appearance of having been inhabited for some time past; but it was fitted up with shelves, that gave it the air of a store-room, and communicated with some other by a door that was fastened across with a slight bar of iron. Constance easily removed it; and, agitated between hope and fear, cautiously lifted up the tapestry on the other side. The hope, however, vanished at once—and terror, undescribable, unresisted terror, seized upon her, when she found herself in a small room, or rather dungeon, at the further end of which stood a stone coffin; and near it, as well as fear and the shadowy light permitted her to discern, a meager and ghastly figure that resembled a man. An agony, to which fainting would have been a relief, struck upon every sense. Pale, speechless, convulsed, she leaned against the door-way. The phantom approached—it touches her hand—it speaks—it is no vision—it is a human being! or rather, alas! it is the wreck of a human being, long since, as it should seem, excluded from every right of humanity.

Why should curiosity be kept in suspense? Reassured by slow degrees, Constance at length learns that this creature, whose form is emaciated by suffering—whose voice is become monotonous, and hardly audible through despair, is no other than the rightful lord of the castle of Valmont—the predecessor of the present one, and his victim. A gleam of benevolence and gratitude, that shot across her soul at being made an instrument in the hands of Heaven to assuage, perhaps to end, misfortunes so intolerable, did more towards recalling the fortitude of Constance than had been effected by all the efforts of reason. Sweet and grateful humanities, that thus by starts show man his truest relation to the Deity! how does your powerful influence brace the feeblest nerves, dilate the narrowest understanding, and strike that electric fire from the heart, which at once invigorates the frame!

"I have told you," said Monsieur de Valmont, perceiving that she had recovered from the agitation and terror his first appearance had excited, "what I was:—Have you patience and courage to hear the means by which I became what I am?"

Constance was now all—and, indeed, more than herself. With a voice, therefore, of sympathy and fortitude, she requested him to proceed.

"Born," said he, "an only son, and heir to an extensive domain, it was my misfortune to inherit from my mother a delicate and sickly constitution, that often afforded little prospect of my reaching maturity. The next heir, who was my cousin, and nearly of my own age, had fallen under the guardianship of my father, and was educated with me. We spent our childhood together. I was sincerely attached to him, and believed my affection requited: it was with regret, therefore, that I saw him depart at a very early period, to enter into a military line, from which my ill health excluded me. His profession brought with it expenses, which his imprudence greatly increased. My father often refused him supplies; but, as we held a constant correspondence, he had the address to gain from *me* what he could not from my parents. Those parents at length descended to the grave! Happy, most happy would it have been for the son they so anxiously reared, had he shared it with them! I was at Paris with my cousin when my father died; and, though absorbed in grief, it even then casually occurred to me, that my newly acquired honors were not recognized by him with the pleasure I had a right to expect. I assured him, however, of my continued regard; supplied him with a large sum of money; and set out for my chateau in the hope of recovering my health, which the air of Paris ill agreed with.

"On the sweet moments of my life which succeeded," added he—pausing, and sighing deeply, "I could dwell long, did I not fear to exhaust your patience. Suffice it to say that it was my fate to meet with a woman, humble indeed in birth, but who, to a degree of beauty beyond all her sex ever boasted, added every charm of virtue and prudence. The obscurity of her origin was no obstacle, in my eyes, to a union which I thought assured me felicity. In a word, I determined to marry her. My relations were alarmed. Letters, expostulations, menaces, reached me. Even my cousin presumed to interfere, in terms that at once excited my chagrin and my resentment. I was, however, the head of my family, and possessed a power of regulating my own actions, which I exerted. I wrote to him to announce my marriage, and to express at the same time the sentiments with which his conduct inspired me. It was some time before I received an answer. One at length was brought me; it was conciliatory and kind. He apologized for the language, which pride, and the prejudices of others, had induced him to hold; and finally assured me, that he rejoiced in my felicity. Ah! how pure, how unalloyed, did my felicity at that moment seem! My wife and I lived together the life of angels! she gave me hopes of an heir. Her parents, as well as all my tenants, shared in our pleasures. I was too happy to be suspicious, or even prudent. In an evil hour I invited my cousin down, and in a still more evil one he arrived.

"Let me shorten my tale," continued the marquis, laying his hand on his forehead, and speaking in a low and suffocated voice. "By indirect methods did this serpent contrive to assemble, in my house and neighborhood, various hirelings devoted to him.—One of them was an apothecary.— A premature labor—a still-born child—blasted my hopes, and even taught me to tremble for the object dearest to my heart. Partly by force, and partly by entreaty, did they prevail on me to leave her apartment—to leave her to *repose;* it was indeed an everlasting one! A long time did not elapse before my cousin entered mine. For the first time did I look at him with horror and distrust. Methought I saw a concealed joy sparkle in his eyes, while, with a harsh and unfeeling tone, he pronounced these words: "Prepare yourself for the worst!—your wife is dead!" I heard no more. He would have detained me: but though inferior to him in strength at all other times, I was then irresistible. Furious through despair, I broke from him, and rushed to her chamber. ——Oh, wife most beloved!" continued Valmont passionately turning towards the coffin, "in what a situation did I find thee! Speechless—struggling in the arms of death—that fair countenance disfigured with livid spots! Merciful heaven! do I recollect it, and exist?"

He paused, as if desirous to collect himself.

"For some hours I ceased to do so. I recovered, however, to every torment of mind and of body! to a burning fever!—to temporary madness!—to horrors inspired by suffering, and increased by oppression and barbarity. Some months elapsed—I became but too sensible—and was therefore, *as they said*, conveyed to Paris to be *cured!*—Oh God! what a cure!—Shut up from air, from day, from consolation! from every claim of nature, or of birthright; a cruel visitation converted into a constitutional malady!" Again he made a pause—a long and fearful pause—while the blood of Constance, she hardly knew why, receded to her heart He looked at her fixedly, but with kindness, and then added, in a slower and more guarded tone, "Let me draw a vail over events at which my imagination recoils, and which time has nearly effaced from my memory. It is now near a century that I have been confined in this miserable dungeon."—Constance started, and saw at once the affecting truth.— "My cousin," continued he, not noticing her emotion, "is doubtless long since dead—the family honors and estates have passed, probably, into the hands of strangers, to whom my person as well as my misfortunes are unknown. It has indeed pleased the Almighty to extend my life in a miraculous manner: but I have no longer any relatives for whom I could wish to live. My reason, cleared and purified from its former wanderings, teaches me to desire nothing beyond these melancholy walls. They at least present me one consolation—one sweet though painful consolation, which I perhaps should not enjoy elsewhere —*It is the hour of visitation!*— Swear to me an eternal secrecy," continued he, loweriug his voice, "and you shall be a witness of it."

Alas! the terrified Constance, before whose imagination fearful images of horror began to float, was in no condition to swear, had he waited the performance of his request: but it vanished from his mind the moment it was made. His countenance grew suddenly animated—his eyes sparkled—he breathed quick; and, bending forward in the attitude of a person who listens, he advanced towards the coffin, and threw himself on his knees by the side of it; where, clasping his hands together, he seemed to lose all recollection in one visionary idea.—Constance, whose terrors were suspended in pity, fixed her streaming eyes upon him. All the charms of youth and health were vanished from a countenance which, when possessed of them, must have been eminently handsome. Monsieur de Valmont could not be above forty, yet had sorrow and suffering scattered "untimely gray" amid the quantity of brown hair that hung neglected on his shoulders. His large hazel eyes had contracted a languor which every moment of emotion bespoke foreign to their original expression; and his stature, noble, graceful, and interesting, demanded that sentiment which rank so often vainly flatters itself with inspiring.

He continued kneeling,—"*Now* is the moment of escape," thought Constance. She again looked earnestly at him. His lips moved, but no articulate sounds issued from them. Trembling, she advanced towards the door by which she had entered, and once more turned her eyes to the marquis. Large and agonizing drops seemed forcing their way to his; yet so unconsciously did they fall, that a smile—a cold and languid smile—played round his lip. He bent his head still lower, as if listening to some imaginary voice; and so perfectly was every sense absorbed in this idea, that Constance no longer hesitated. Her hand is on the door—she opens it—makes but one step into the outer room, and the barrier is once more dropped between her and the unfortunate Valmont.

Slowly, and buried in thought, she returned through the corridor. All visionary terrors had faded from her mind. The image of *real* misery was before her eyes, and the acuteness of *real* suffering wrung her heart. A painful doubt, too, now obtruded there. Had she a right to close again the door heaven so singularly destined her to open? Was *she* to become an accomplice in injustice? to deny the common blessings of air and day-light to one who languished in a living grave? A sensation like remorse, a painful and oppressive feeling, seized upon her heart; and hardly were the various motives of prudence and propriety, which presented themselves, strong enough to prevent her returning, once more to raise the cruel bar she had so rashly dared to drop.

From a harassed and half-sleepless night, where the pale shade of Valmont still haunted her dreams, she opened her eyes upon more new and extraordinary realities. After viewing the sufferings of the oppressed, she was now to witness the heavy retribution that fell on the oppressor.

By a strange concurrence of events, distinction, power, and affluence, had insensibly vanished from the grasp of a man, who, to these accumulated losses, secretly added that of an unsullied conscience: and the possessor of the inheritance of Valmont was hardly less an object of commiseration than the being he had deprived of it.

The communication between the marquis, his son, and Valrive, had been finally cut off. The blood that deluged Paris had even swept away all traces that could ascertain the existence of the two latter. The titles of the marquis were annihilated—his estates were plundered—himself on the point of being denounced—and nothing remained for his personal security but flight.

"You are free," said he to the astonished Constance, as, pale and haggard, he traversed her apartment and imperfectly detailed his situation—"free to wander over an accursed country, which I renounce. Return to that wretched old man whom it was my fate to crush to the humble lot in which he now finds a security I want. Go!" said he, giving her a handful of *assignats*, with a wildness and impatience that left him not time to consider the embarrassment of her situation—"Go! Let me carry with me the consolation of thinking I have done one act of justice."

A thousand tumultuous ideas passed across the mind of Constance. To go—strange and mad as the proposal seemed of plunging her thus abruptly into a world she knew not, would hardly have cost her a moment's hesitation. But it was no longer her own fate only on which she was to decide. The skeleton of Valmont, neglected, forgotten, perishing with famine, or in the flames to which she understood the peasants had devoted the castle, presented itself instantaneously to her imagination.

"Is there," said she, while actuated irresistibly by this idea—"is there no other prisoner to whom your justice should extend?"—The marquis started—"No unhappy relative," she added, trembling excessively as she perceived his countenance change, "to whom your mercy—whose claims—whose misfortunes I mean—" The look of the marquis transfixed her—she already saw

> "Graves in his smiles—death in his bloodless hands;"

for a smile of bitter rage and indignation quivered on his lip.

"You have seen him, then?" said he, commanding his voice—"You have doubtless reported the tales of Dorsain, and you have yourself credited the dreams of insanity and dotage! You mean to propagate them, too! Beware that you do not prepare a worse fate for——him you would liberate!"

The pause that preceded the last sentence was lost upon Constance. Half the speech was inexplicable; the whole scene appeared a vision; and she found herself alone, she hardly knew how: terror-struck, bewildered, and sensible too late that she had exposed the imprisoned Valmont to dangers more immediate then those she would have guarded him against. To release him from his confinement, and throw him and herself on the protection of the domestics, appeared now indispensable to the safety of both. The disaffection of those domestics the marquis had already betrayed to her, and she saw her own security in his fears: yet was it not without perturbation that she prepared again to visit a spot which she had quitted with impressions so gloomy. Fear, however, was superfluous: for Valmont was buried in a profound sleep which her light and timid step disturbed not. She paused and looked round her in silence. The apartment, though not humid, was cold enough to communicate a shiver to beings who know what it is to enjoy the fireside comforts—the cheerful hearth, so justly allotted to the household gods, and within whose magic circle a thousand graceful affections and nameless courtesies seem to dwell!

The sarcophagus, which was evidently antique, though doubtless placed there to cherish a melancholy remembrance, served the unfortunate Valmont as a resting-place. More than half his face was buried in his arm—cold dews stood on his brow, and a strong hectic flushed his cheek, while sighs, or starts, disturbed his respiration. In one of them he awoke——

"You are come again, then!" said he, fixing his eyes on her—"How did you vanish? I began to doubt whether you were a human being or some consoling angel. Why," added he, suddenly changing his tone to extreme asperity—"why did you stay away so long, or wherefore are you now returned? Did you fear that misery was contagious?"

There was something so touching and so frightful in the embittered insensibility of his manner, that it overwhelmed the already half-subdued spirits of Constance, and she burst into tears.

Valmont, born a compound of every gentle and generous affection, felt, though he could not reason upon such a reply.

"You are very young—you are very timid," said he, softening his tone. "I perhaps frighten you!—Perhaps the recital of my sufferings—" He paused with a look of self-distrust his countenance often assumed, and, pressing his hand on his forehead, added, "Yet, if you knew how much it relieved me!—how I *longed* to speak to you again!—"

Constance wept more abundantly than before. Perhaps there is no sensation of the human heart more complicated or affecting than that of knowing it has, by one tender stroke of sympathy, assuaged a grief it feels impotent to cure.

The interest expressed by her tears tranquilized Valmont; and as soon as she could trust her voice, she endeavored to explain to him that she was no less a prisoner than himself.

"The world," said he, after listening to her with the most profound attention, "is then what I long ago supposed it—a scene of oppression, from the effects of which no innocence can shelter us. Resolve, like me, never to enter it again."

"And live—or rather, I fear, die—a victim!" said Constance.

"You are then rich!"

"Alas, no!" she replied, with a tone between peevishness and depression.—Valmont, whose imagination, long fixed to one point, had seen nothing in her confinement but a plan to deprive her of some envied advantage of rank or fortune, now gazed, as her blushes and tremor heightened her beauty, with a consciousness of it he had not before felt; and no sooner did his mind catch a ray of the truth, than it became perfectly enlightened. The warm blood so long congealed round his heart once more began to flow obedient to the voice of humanity; and in the wild hope of *affording* protection he seemed to have forgotten how much he wanted it.

Yet though steady to honor and to feeling, there was one point on which his reason nevertheless still obstinately wandered—it was the period during which he had been secluded. That dismal and solitary period had made an impression no argument could correct:—in vain did she offer every rational one. "Do not," said he, "attempt to deceive me! I have had nothing to do but to measure and calculate those hours which have passed lightly over the heads of the gay and the happy! Their duration assures me that the present Marquis de Valmont can not be my cousin. Yet will I once more, for your sake, emerge to a world where I shall doubtless be a stranger. If what you tell me approaches to truth, the same monarch sits upon the throne. I will appeal to his tribunal—I will rescue my inheritance from the hands of spoilers."

"Alas!" said Constance, "let us rather appeal to the tribunal of that Being before whom the monarch you speak of has been awfully summoned to appear!"

"*Louis Seize* is then dead!" said Valmont, starting: "But his queen—his son—?"

"Perished—crushed—annihilated—vanished from the face of the earth"—would have been the answer of Constance, could she but have looked a little, a very little, into that fearful future which fancy itself yet hardly ventured to sully so deep with blood.

"They exist," said she, mournfully; "but they are no longer royal. France is a republic!—

"*France a republic!*" re-echoed Valmont, with astonishment. "What is it you tell me? Ah, I have indeed been buried centuries if this be truth!"

Constance briefly recited the story of her country.

Valmont listened — doubted — listened—and doubted still.

That, green in youth, she should have seen the gaudiest and gayest flowers of creation thus blighted; the vast consolidated mass of prejudice and principle whole ages had accumulated crumbled at once to dust; systems annihilated that seemed incorporate with thought itself:—a whole nation changing, with one convulsive crisis, its character, its manners, and its laws;—reason more steady than Valmont's would have grown dizzy with the prospect; and humanity shuddered at her own errors, whether she calculated the enormous pile of evil she had destroyed, or that she was, perhaps, assisting to raise.

Confused voices, which decidedly, though imperfectly, rang through the hollow arches of the chateau, suspended the attention of Constance and Valmont, even from the affecting detail by which they were engrossed. The sounds increased every moment: by degrees they grew mingled with shrieks, with jarring footsteps, with loud and near-approaching accents. A discharge of muskets was heard;—a pause—a shout—a fearful interval of tumult ensued, and Constance had hardly time to tell herself they were at the mercy of a populace, when a door on the further side was forcibly burst open, and a confused mass of people, of all ages and descriptions, rushed in. Of the ferocious kindness of which he was the object Valmont comprehended nothing: dragged forth, he hardly knew how, or why, to the overpowering glare of day, he indeed

> "Rais'd his heavy eyes, and sought the light;
> But, having found it, sicken'd at the sight;"

and while the cries of *libertē* and *la nation* rent the very air, the poor and solitary blessing of existence seemed mounting towards heaven with them. The affrighted Constance had only sense enough left to perceive that the hands of her deliverers were dyed in blood, and that Providence had made the worst passions of man awful ministers to correct his worst abuses.

Amid the noisy exultation of the moment, some attempted to pour wine, of which they had dragged large quantities from the marquis's cellars, down the throat of him they had liberated. But nature refused: the pulse of life stood still: the group around gazed on the human ruin: of its wrongs or its resentments nothing seemed to remain but dust; yet they continued to wrong and to resent.

By degrees they grew weary of the trouble of humanity.—"La jeune fille, et son père," for so the rabble termed them, were insensibly deserted for the more alluring objects of plunder and revenge; and when the feeble flutter of existence began once more to be visible in Valmont, Constance found herself still kneeling by him on the greensward, with no other companion than a child of about ten years of age, who, though it had joined the crowd, had not courage to plunge into the long galleries, and unknown apartments, of the castle. This succor, feeble as it appeared, was not, however, useless. It was the means of obtaining water; which, plentifully thrown over Valmont, effected what the wine could not, and he once more opened his eyes. Their wild and interesting languor sensibly touched the heart of Constance; and without attempting explanations which neither appeared to have strength to bear, she took advantage of his extreme gentleness and docility to lead him to a cottage, which the child assured her was inhabited by his mother, at less than half a league's distance.

This miserable shelter they with great difficulty reached; and, with still more difficulty obtained admittance. The woman, who alone remained at home, regarded them with a sullen and mistrustful air, muttering some phrases to herself, in which the term *aristocrate* was alone to be distinguished. Her countenance, however, cleared on being told by the boy they were prisoners, liberated *par ses compatriotes;* and, moved by the supplications of Constance, she showed them one poor apartment, where a flock-bed afforded the now quite bewildered and exhausted Valmont a temporary stupefaction rather than repose.

Sad and comfortless meantime were the reflections of

Constance. The house was lonely, and on the verge of a wood. She placed a chair by the casement; and, as the moon rose from behind the dark edges of the trees, prepared herself thus to pass a long, cold, and dreary night in winter, without any prospect that the morning would better her situation. She could neither hear of carriage, horses, or conveyance of any kind, by which she might hope once more to reach the hospitable roof of Dorsain, though the assignats providentially given her by the marquis enabled her to offer an ample recompense. That unfortunate marquis himself continually haunted her imagination—she saw him pursued by his own vassals—agonized, mangled, serving perhaps as a bloody trophy of their triumph. This was no dream of fancy and credulity—it was a horrible picture, of which the letters of the young chevalier and Valrive had described too many originals; and she even shuddered with doubt whether the ensuing day might not realize it, and possibly render both herself and her companion helpless pageants in some savage festival.

Reflections like these at length exhausted the energy of her mind, while sad necessity tranquilized it. Three hours of watching and profound silence began to stupefy her senses, and drowsiness was sinking into slumber, when a sudden consciousness made her start, and listen to what was passing below. The voices of men, and the trampling of horses, with a faint idea of having heard a carriage, at once assailed her. Oh! it was not that only! a name dear and familiar to her heart struck at once upon her ear. "Valrive, Valrive, Valrive," repeated often, and familiarly, in tones that spoke him present, communicated to every pulse a throb so tumultuous, that hardly had she power to totter down the dark and narrow staircase that separated her from the room below.—A group of common looking men stood around the kitchen fire, over whom her eyes fearfully wandered, as she perceived she had attracted theirs, without being able to trace one likeness to him she sought.

"Monsieur Valrive n'est pas ici," said she, shrinking back.—

"Si, si, Ma'm'selle!" said one of the group, fixing on her a stare of surprise. "Valrive! où est-tu donc?" added he, raising his voice.

"Ma foi, c'est un garçon à bonnes fortunes ce Valrive!" said another, taking up a candle, and looking confidently in her face. Constance drew back, and uttered inarticulately she knew not what.

"Valrive! viens, mon ami!" again shouted the first. "On te demande avec instance;" and with a sneer he pushed forward a person who entered. How did Constance recoil, when, almost on the point of sinking into his arms for shelter, she beheld—not a lover—not a protector—not, in short, her Valrive—but a countenance wholly new, or of which she could only have the faintest recollection, as it once glanced across her on returning from her favorite cottage; a countenance whose singular hardness even then had offended her, and which now, lighted up with insolent familiarity, froze her very blood!

"Ah, I have been mistaken!" said she, turning pale, and shrinking from the embrace he seemed preparing to take. An incredulous shout followed the sentence; and the stranger, who seemed piqued by it into additional effrontery, attempted to seize her hand. With a loud and vehement exclamation of terror, again she repulsed him.

"What voice was that?" said a young man, who rushed at the same moment into the kitchen. Breathless and pale, Constance would have fallen but for his support; while a thousand joyful emotions overcame her still more than her fears had done. She had *now* indeed found her lover—but that lover was no longer Valrive—no longer a venal dependent, unwilling or unable to protect her—

He was brave—noble—he was, apparently, no other than the Chevalier de Valmont himself!—or rather, he had been all these; and Constance remembered not that he was now nothing.

Valmont, however, who had had much and sorrowful experience, did not wholly forget this. Recovered from the emotion of the moment, he spoke with much gentleness and complacency to the men around, who had now retreated to the distance of some paces, and from whose altered demeanor and address to him, though not wholly what it would once have been, she had discovered he was their lord. Then taking a light from the one that stood nearest, he conducted her in silence up stairs.

Constance, who, in the transport of this unexpected meeting, had forgotten every thing else, now struck with his manner, fixed her eyes upon him in fearful expectation. Unlike the gay and happy lover she had once seen, hardly would she have guessed him to have been a lover at all, but from the extreme emotion that seemed to shake his whole frame. Somewhat, indeed, he said of joy, and somewhat of tenderness; but it was rather her heart than her ear that caught the sounds. What, however, was her astonishment, when, in a tone and manner that spoke him fully acquainted with all the events that had taken place since their parting, he eagerly questioned her about his father!

In an imperfect voice she detailed a little of what she knew, and a little of what she feared.—"It is time," said he, in a low tone, and without commenting upon the story as she concluded it, "to release from this spot one whom nothing but persecution and calamity can attend here!—The means are fortunately yet in my power—Oh! let me then," added he, tenderly folding her to his bosom, "communicate somewhat of those happy presentiments to which our unexpected meeting has given birth!"

Constance was not duped by this semblance of tranquillity. The wretched candle that lighted them had shown her a countenance that ill accorded with his words; and hardly had he quitted her, which he did precipitately on pronouncing the last sentence, than all the melancholy truth rushed upon her imagination. Surrounded by beings who, emancipated from oppression, saw a degraded tyrant in every one born rich or noble, he was but too much exposed to danger in his own person, and in that of his father devoted to destruction.—Under these melancholy impressions terrible did the moments of his absence seem; and most insupportable the intrusion of her hostess, who brought a refreshment of wine and biscuits, she doubted not, by his direction; while the impertinent Valrive gratified his curiosity, by assisting in the ceremony, and eyeing her with half-suppressed insolence.

The .sound of wheels again attracted her to the casement; and the moon shone full upon a carriage, near which stood the chevalier, in earnest conversation with two men. He appeared to be giving them directions, and money—it was too plain then that he meant to send her away.—Without knowing why, she eagerly opened the casement:—he saw her, and was almost instantly in the room.

"Constance—dearest Constance," said he, as he closed the door, "at what a moment have we met! It is now only for a moment; but, if that in which we are to meet again ever arrives in this world, how much shall I have to tell you!"

"Whither then are you going?"

"To my father," replied he, with embarrassment.—Constance was no longer mistress of herself—her terrors, her doubts, her certainties, blazed out at once: but the eloquence of all was ineffectual towards shaking the resolution of her lover; whose internal conviction of the fate that awaited him vailed itself under a thousand specious arguments, which, though she disbelieved, she vainly strove to controvert. On the point at length of yielding to his entreaties, a recollection flashed across her mind, which the agitation of the moment had driven from it.

"You are yet to learn," said she, stepping back with embarrassment from the door of the apartment, "that I am not alone."

"And who is your companion?"

"A man—in whose fate I—I am so much interested—"

"Ah, beware of what you tell me," said her lover, starting wildly—"there wants only that!"—Constance, frightened at the eagerness of his manner, faltered, and knew not what to say. In the chevalier *she* saw the most amiable of human beings, and in Valmont the most unfortunate. But would they view each other with the same eyes? Grievous had been the confinement of the unhappy marquis—long and painful the days of his oppression: but his oppressor was the father of the chevalier: and by what right could she impart to the man, from whom it might be most necessary to conceal it, a secret confided by insanity, and rendered sacred by misfortune?

"The moments," said the chevalier, with an anguish ill-subdued, as he perceived the irresolution of her mind, "admit not of our pausing even over that which is to ascertain the future value of existence! We *must* part, Constance. Yet, if it is ever permitted me again to grasp the hand which now trembles in mine, remember it is affianced—remember, I seal upon it a sacred and inalienable vow; and should my Constance live to have a widowed heart, as probably she will, let me bear into another world the consciousness that I shall, for a time at least, live in her memory!" Without waiting her answer, and as if he mistrusted his own fortitude, he would have led her down stairs. Unable to speak, she pointed in silence to the bed, on which he, for the first time, noticed Valmont. With tremulous curiosity he snatched up the light, and drew near. It struck upon the eyes of the marquis: he opened them, looked at Constance, and, laying her hand upon his burning forehead, closed them again in silence. The astonished chevalier gazed alternately at both, and hastily started out of the room. Again, almost as hastily, he returned. But Constance, roused to energy by the distress of the occasion, had already, with her enfeebled companion, advanced towards the stairs. The hand of her lover involuntarily, and with a sort of sullen tenderness, received hers. Anxious to speak, she trembled, doubted, and knew not what to say; nor did one of the group, as they passed through the kitchen, recollect the extraordinary spectacle they presented to the eyes of those collected there. The silence continued till she was in the carriage. An exquisite pain then seemed to seize suddenly upon her heart: she bent forward to speak. The eyes of the chevalier, riveted upon her, had more than sadness—had more than love in them—there was agony—there was despair! Struck with their expression, she clasped her hands together, almost in the act of springing from the carriage, when the horses at the same moment began to move, and she was already many paces from him.—Silence, darkness, and a long track of woody road succeeded. As moonlight struck through the breaks, she put her head out of the window, in the vain hope of once more seeing at least a ray of light from the cottage which now contained the being to which her heart had most tenderly attached itself. For a few moments Valmont silently followed the vehicle with his eye, and dwelt upon her image; then burying it in his heart, turned both to blacker prospects.

Amidst the numberless painful ideas pressing on Constance, that of her own singular situation now first occurred in its true colors. She viewed it as a dream. Immured in the chateau, the single sentiment of captivity and sorrow absorbing every other, had formed an imaginary connection between herself and the imprisoned Valmont. But now that various objects and feelings divided her attention, she had some difficulty to recollect the force of her former impressions. Perhaps a latent sense of regret, on reflecting that by means of the marquis she had added a momentary pang to those already felt by her lover, contributed to estrange her from the former. But Valmont was not born to be the object of disgust. A natural eloquence, a low and pleasant voice, a sedateness of manner that had all the effect of reason with the wildness of fancy, soon conciliated the interest she was beginning to renounce. Hard indeed must have been the heart that could have resisted him! The weakness attending so painful an exertion as that of walking, had brought on a temporary inanity rather than slumber, from which, as he slowly recovered, it was nevertheless visible he had derived refreshment. He began now to dwell upon events, which, while the torrent rushed by him, he had been unable to comprehend. There was something so affecting in his imperfect attempts at recollection, in his disjointed efforts to fix ideas, which, like shadows upon the wall, wavered and played before the yet unsteady lamp of reason, that Constance insensibly directed her efforts to the same point. Nor were they unsuccessful. All the objects of creation, as they began again to be visible to his eyes, resumed their natural influence over his heart. The long-forgotten image of his home, his native domain, to which Constance had, in general terms, assured him their journey was directed, kindled once more that secret and inexplicable flame, which ever burns through the veins when we touch the circle with which our affections incorporate us.

But a danger new and unexpected now occurred. At the post-house, where the avant-courier dispatched by the chevalier as their guard, had already prepared horses, Constance had the indiscretion to pull out a considerable number of assignats. The *face* of the post-master informed her that the horses were already paid for; but his tongue was not equally sincere. To the mortification of seeing herself duped by paying for them again was added the terror of knowing that she had fallen into the power of men rapacious enough, under the name of protectors, to abet the extortion: and in whose inquisitive countenances, as the lights gleamed upon them, she discovered an expression that conveyed a terrible pulsation to her heart. She saw too late that the prudence of the chevalier in providing for the expenses of her journey, had yet not been sufficiently watchful to think of cautioning her on the subject: but the moments spent in irresolution decided themselves, and they once more entered on a dreary road. The men who still followed, whether impelled by fear of danger, or some worse motive, she perceived rode nearer the carriage than before; sometimes talking loudly together; at others joining in the *ça ira*, or thundering out the Marseilles hymn. At length,

> "Wish'd morning came! and now upon the plains,
> And distant hills, the shepherds fed their flocks:"

but never was rural prospect half so delightful to the eye of an enthusiast as that of the towers and buildings of a large city to the now exhausted Constance. They were not long in reaching it. Her guides conducted her to an hotel, and her fate at length seemed at a pause.

The chevalier, in whom the distracted state of his country had already matured a spirit of precaution little congenial to his natural character, had given the men to whom he entrusted Constance every charge that might ensure her safety. They were instructed to take the necessary steps with the police; and as soon as their depositions had secured a proper passport, by establishing the certainty that both she and her companion were prisoners liberated in a popular commotion, one of them was to return with the information to the chevalier. He obeyed: but previous to his departure presented himself to Constance with the air of a man who, conscious of having conferred an important service, comes rather to demand than to solicit a reward. Though given with liberality, it satisfied him not; but his comrade, stepping forward, remonstrated with some warmth on the injustice of expecting a further recompense, while assured of an ample one on the part of the chevalier, and reminded him at the same time that the latter awaited his return with the greatest impatience.

"Let him wait," replied the other, in a brutal tone, as he went away: "Chacun à son tour." Constance felt a pang at her heart. This wretch was to return as one of the *protectors* of the chevalier. The relief she herself even might have experienced in being freed from him was soon lost in apprehension, when she perceived that his dismission took from his companion the only check he feared, because, probably, the only sharer in the plunder he meditated. Equivocal, or insolent answers, as to the probable length of their journey, plunged her in alarm: the journey itself became visibly slower and slower. His rapacity, increasing with her apparent terrors, soon left her little to give; and that little she was often obliged to share with the *bons patriotes*, whom he encouraged to loiter around them. With these people, who were, indeed, every thing but what they called themselves, a look might be a crime, and a word, destruction. Every post, every village, became a new scene of danger and delay. Yet the posts were insensibly passed, the villages were left behind; and, after accumulated fatigue, suffering, and apprehensions, Constance found, with unspeakable transport, that she was within a short distance of the chateau de Valmont!

The transport, however, was momentary. Her guide, whose reverence for the name of Valmont had been daily diminishing, found nothing as he approached the domain that should strengthen it; and falling in with some of his acquaintance, whose business was plunder, he scrupled not to declare to Constance that both she and her fellow-traveler must find their way on as well as they could; and that, to secure their own safety, it would be advisable first to part with all the little wealth that remained to her. Remonstrance was vain; and in silent terror she complied.

No other alternative now presented itself but that of exploring a road, which, fortunately, was not wholly unknown to her. It was already the close of evening, and frost lay hard upon the ground. She lifted her eyes to the stars which were bright above her head, and addressed herself silently through them to the Deity that bade them shine. Invigorated by hope, and within the circle of home, *she* found no difficulty in proceeding: but it was otherwise with Valmont. A league became to him a distance which his footsteps were as ill able to trace as his reason to calculate. Already both began to fail. Hopeless—helpless, they sat down together, "under the shade of melancholy boughs," when Constance exclaimed, with a start of joy, "Surely I see Thibaut!" Thibaut was a young carpenter of the village: and with tumultuous pleasure she recognized a face that was familiar to her. The lad, whose good nature was yet uncorrupted by the world, greeted her with cordiality, and, though returning from his day's labor, offered to be of any service to her that she might require.

His arm was more steady than that of Constance, and Valmont again crept on; but nature was fainting within him, and to reach the habitation of Dorsain appeared wholly impracticable. It was at that moment the recollection of her once favorite cottage glanced across the mind of Constance. The distance to it was much less; the shelter, if it still stood, was certain. Even were the door fast, the strength of Thibaut, a stout lad of eighteen, could easily force it. To the cottage, therefore, she directed their steps; and to the cottage, after many a weary step, they came. Yet she saw it not without a strong palpitation. Her eyes rested there intently, as all the remembrances attached to it passed across her heart. It afforded indeed shelter, but neither light nor food; and earnestly recommending the marquis therefore to the care of Thibaut, who engaged to watch with him during her absence, she pressed forward to the habitation of Dorsain.

The moon was now rising, and every spot as it opened before her became more and more interesting. It was *here* she had parted with the chevalier; at the foot of *that* declivity she had the ill fortune to be seen by his father. *There*, embosomed in trees, was the roof of Dorsain—and *there*, rising full in sight, the chateau of Valmont. Part of it had been laid in ruins by the peasants; smoke had disfigured the rest; and the marks of plunder and devastation were every where visible. "Ah, if such is the fate of grandeur ——" thought Constance, as she directed her eyes eagerly forwards—Her fears were ill founded!—The cottage of Dorsain, secure in its poverty, still remained: still did its humble casement emit a cheerful and far-streaming ray, while all was dark and silent round the superb chateau.

With a trembling hand Constance tapped softly at the door, and at the same moment lifted the latch. Two men were sitting by the fire, one of whom instantly advanced with a taper in his hand: the light shone full upon his features, and they were those of Dorsain. The joy of both blended in a gush of tears, and for some moments they wept in silence. Antoine, who had also started from the chimney corner, first suspended the tide by his busy inquiries; and Constance, whose heart, despite of all that engaged it there, flew back to the suffering Valmont, recited, in as few words as she could, his extraordinary history, together with that of her own absence. Dorsain and Antoine listened to her with greedy attention. Their eyes, their ears, their very souls seemed absorbed in the narrative.

"Que le bon Dieu soit loué!" exclaimed the latter, ere she had well finished; while the quivering lips and pale countenance of Dorsain showed him incapable of articulating a syllable. "Et le pauvre Thuriot! comme il s'en rejouira! Ah, savez-vous, ma'm'selle, que c'est votre père dont il s'agit?" *

"Yes, Constance, it *is* thy father," added Dorsain, in broken but joyful accents; "it was my daughter the generous Valmont raised from obscurity! Oh, if ever there was an angel upon earth, it was he! That cottage thy little heart intuitively attached itself to, was the scene of his love and his benefits. We were too happy, my child! I am afraid we forgot God Almighty, for he sent a scourge to punish us. Thy mother was the victim; and but for the good Thuriot, then only a journeyman apothecary, thy little spark of being would never have been recalled. Ah, in that *very* cottage wert thou born; and there stands thy poor mother's death-bed!"

The shock was too mighty for Constance. She tottered, turned pale, and sunk to the ground.

The dreadful, deadly apprehension that had seized upon her heart was communicated in a look; no words could be added to it; with trembling steps they flew towards the cottage. Already they approached it; already the reedy pool behind it became visible by a stream of moonlight that pierced through the now leafless branches. A man, who stood stooping over the brink, attracted their eye. It was Thibaut, who, with a pitcher in his hand, was breaking the surface of ice to draw water. He advanced to them in haste, but with a countenance that bade their hearts beat less anxiously.

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* "Thanks be to God!—Poor Thuriot! how he will rejoice! Do you know, ma'm'selle, that it is your father you are talking of?"

"He is well?" cried Constance, while yet afar off.

"Ah, Dieu merci! very well now, ma'm'selle," said Thibaut; "but he has been fearfully bad. To be sure, the mad fit came on him when the moon shone out; and, would you believe it? he that had not before a foot to set to the ground, ran all over the house like a lapwing. And then he talked, and then he was convulsed. But I gave him water, and he is *gone to sleep!*"

As Thibaut spoke, they were already in the chamber, which the moon now fully illumined. Valmont lay half reclined upon the bed, his face towards the pillow; the long hair of his wife, which he had found, was treasured in his breast.——He had indeed slept—the sleep of death. No longer suffering, no longer convulsed, no longer a maniac, his soul had rejoined its Creator; there to claim and to receive the glorious recompense due to those who have suffered without guilt.

> "How the world falls to pieces all around,
> And leaves us but the ruin of our joys!
> What says this transportation of our friends?
> It bids us love the place where now they dwell,
> And scorn the wretched spot they leave so poor."

A rude coffin constructed by Thibaut, a grave dug within the limits of the garden, the prayers of the devout, and the tears of the innocent, were all the funeral rites of the Marquis de Valmont. The curé of the village, driven from his home, had left none to supply his place; and such was the spirit of the times, that a religious duty, even to dust, was likely to have been deemed a crime. *That* dust had once been noble, rich—Alas! that it was human too, would probably, amid the convulsions of humanity, have been forgotten!

Yet does the weakness of nature blend with its most solemn duties! The grave of the marquis was a chosen spot. It lay open to the western sun; and the hillock that marked it received his last reflected ray, as it glanced from the windows of the beloved cottage.

"Let us beware, my child," said Dorsain, as he dragged from it the weeping Constance, "let us beware how we deem that spot unhallowed which receives the ashes of the good! It is no longer the breath of a mortal—it is the Divinity himself who sanctifies it!"

They were now in the very heart of winter. Nature and man seemed in unison to desolate the earth. France daily poured forth miserable thousands, to endure all the severities of the season in foreign countries, while those that remained at home groaned under the accumulated evils of anarchy and bloodshed. That she had witnessed them seemed now a frightful vision to Constance, as, shut up in a lonely cottage, the sole consolation and support of an aged parent, who during her absence had lost his wife, half stunned, she listened to the distant storm of nature and society. With her the stream of life now seemed to stagnate. How wild and irregular is its current! Impelled, at some periods of it, by strange and irresistible events, we rush forward into action; and, hurried from thought to thought, imagination has no scope to paint the future, and memory no time to rest upon the past. At others, the soul is driven back upon herself; the senses subside into torpor; memory or imagination become our whole of existence;

> "And nothing *is* but what is not."

Such was now the fate of Constance!—Week after week rolled heavily away, and the chevalier appeared not. Already she divined his fate. His last words recurred to her with all the force of a prediction. She repeated them to herself every night before she closed her eyes; and, even in sleep, officious memory still told her of her *widowed heart.*

Yet for the pure spirits, accustomed to look out of themselves, and direct their view by turns to God and man, a balm will be found even in the hour of suffering! It was through the medium of her own sorrows that Constance became truly alive to the duty of assuaging those of others. The conviction sank deep in her heart. All its turbulent feelings harmonized by degrees into a soft and useful sensibility. The extraordinary convulsions of civil society daily called upon her to exercise it, and she learned to value, whilst administering them, the blessings of benevolence, and the consolations of piety.

Though shrinking before the piercing winds of spring, she neglected not to offer up her first prayers every morning over the grave of her father. Already the ground, no longer hard with intense frost, began to open itself to her tears, and to put forth the crocus, the snowdrop, and the few early flowers with which she had marked it round. It was yet but the gray dawn of morning, when, raising her eyes from the spot they had been fixed on, full of melancholy recollections, she directed them towards the cottage. Suddenly she perceived a stream of light issue through its broken shutters. She started, and continued to gaze more intently. It was no illusion. A light, like the gentle fanning of a flame, perceptibly shone, and died away. Trembling with curiosity, she drew nearer. It was not difficult, through the cleft of the shutter, to distinguish all that was passing within. A young peasant, poorly clad, was standing on the hearth, by a small pile of chips, to which he had set fire. He seemed pierced with cold; for he frequently stooped, chafed his hands, and carefully kept up the little blaze with every remnant of fuel he could collect. Constance had lately seen but too many of her countrymen plunged in the direst extremes of suffering not to feel her compassion awakened: But, oh! how piercing was the pang that seized upon her heart, when the young man, by a sudden turn, received the light full on his countenance, and discovered to her the features of the chevalier! A cry of anguish announced to him that he was observed; and Constance, Constance, who but a few moments before had wept for the imaginary death of her lover, suddenly found herself in his arms!

For the joy, the sorrow, the tender agony of that moment, there were no words; and Valmont himself shed tears as he held her to his bosom.

"It is here, then, that I find you," said he; "here, on the spot where, by a mystery to me then inconceivable, though in the end too fully understood, you seemed to vanish from me! Nor did Fortune, beloved Constance! stop there: every good she had ever bestowed seemed vanishing with you!

"It was in the midst of extravagant conjectures—of fruitless researches—of burning anxiety for your fate, the unlooked for intelligence reached me, that both my own and my father's were on the point of being decided. In vain had we retreated from the metropolis; its horrors, its suspicions, pursued us: and our very existence was then weighing in that political balance, of which the bloody scale had long been known to preponderate.

"Insurmountable necessity called me hence; yet, dupe that I was, even at the moment of departing, it was to the man whose artifices had detained me beyond my appointment with you—whose villainy had made him the ready tool of villainy in others—to the profligate instrument of my own follies, as I believed, but in reality to the spy of my father, that I committed the dearest secret of my bosom. To Valrive I left the charge of tracing you. Oh, Constance, Constance! bitter is the pang, when those evils that fall upon us through the corruption of others come with the accumulated weight of our example to justify them!"

Valmont, to whose heart the story of his country was present, made a long pause, while his eyes swam in tears, and his cheek burned with the shame of retrospection.

"Views, I myself hardly analyzed," he continued, "uniting with the well founded prejudice you so artlessly betrayed at our first meeting, induced me to assume the name of an inferior, in order to lull your caution to sleep. In this, however, I was near being the victim of my own duplicity; for Valrive himself, by his impertinent intrusion soon after into your cottage, occasioned you an alarm, and me an indignation, the cause of which it was impossible I should explain to you. That he was probably the agent of some of that circle by whom you had been seen I indeed easily conjectured: but I knew my protection to be of more value to him than theirs; and, though I did not minutely explain my reasons, I gave him clearly to understand that he was never to appear before you but by my command. His name, therefore, I safely continued to retain; and when, on my own departure, I left to him the care of seeking you, I felt a secret persuasion that a name so familiar to your ears would of itself, should it reach them, forward a discovery of the place of your concealment.

"With a distracted heart I flew to Paris. How many distracted ones did I find there! My opinions, which, in the early struggles, had decidedly inclined to the popular party, still left me friends amidst the faction most adverse to my father. I had even the good fortune to be personally beloved by many with whom I did not wholly accord in politics. Young, fearless, and ready, as they believed, to stand forth a daring partisan of any leader to whom I should attach myself, I suddenly became, by a strange fluctuation in my fate, the object of enthusiasm and applause.

"I had now entered that vortex from which I found it impossible to retreat. Thousands were daily ingulfed by it before my eyes. Of those that yet floated on the surface, many touched the fearful point that was to sink them. I was myself fast approaching to it; for the opinions that were still mine were no longer those of the multitude. My father, in the interim, in whose heart my flattering reception had planted an imaginary dagger, reprobated the conduct by which alone his liberty or life was secured. The perfidious Valrive, whom, with a confidence as misplaced as my own, he had sent after me to Paris, soon learned to think of raising his fortunes upon the wreck of ours. Though I was in fact the only bulwark between my father and destruction, yet by a train of insidious artifices were the feuds between us hourly increased; and while to him I became suspected of little less than parricide, every engine was set in motion by a party to render me really such. Daily receiving from him letters full of bitter reproach; death before my eyes, and indignation in my heart; what days, what nights were mine!—Shall I dare to say that love itself was superseded? I began to reconcile myself to your loss? There were moments when I even deemed it providential. Yes, lovely Constance! when I recollected the time, the place, the circumstances of our intended meeting—all that was wrong in my own character, and all that was charming in yours, I learned too justly to doubt myself. Oh, let me not lose your regard by the very candor which shows you how much I deserve it!

"The hour of mortal trial at length came on. After my duties had struggled against temptation in almost every shape, it was from Valrive I received the extraordinary news of your imprisonment at the chateau; received it at the dreadful crisis when my father was about to follow you. Too well aware of the licentiousness of his character, how distracting were my apprehensions!—Prudence, policy,—all that had hitherto guided me, vanished into air. I flew to obtain a passport—it was denied me. I would, at any risk, have quitted Paris without one. The barriers were closed. In the desperation of my heart I wrote a letter. How it reached my father I know not, but it did reach him: his answer was strange, was enigmatical. He spoke of you as of one whom he feared; whom he abhorred; and while in the most solemn terms he re-assured my heart on the point it was most jealously alive to, he left me impressed with a vague terror as to your future fate. Of this Valrive either could not, or would not, inform me; and it was during these moments of perturbation and rage that he mysteriously insinuated to me the execrable project of denouncing my father. My blood flowed back with a chill like that of death; but I had lived amongst savages who called themselves politicians, and believed I had learned to dissemble. I therefore rejected his proposed, but accepted from him a passport obtained under a feigned name from a popular leader. It was only one hour previous to that on which I should have availed myself of it, that I received through a friend of the same party an intimation that it would prove the signal of my fate; that a mandate had been privately issued to arrest the bearer; and that Valrive, to whom my countenance had doubtless been more sincere than my words, had, while thus securing *me* in the snare, been himself the indirect means of denouncing his lord.

"Why should I recount to you all the horrible perplexities that ensued? Suffice it to say, that finding it impossible to save my father, I made a secret oath to die with him. By a strenuous exertion of the credit I had left, I at length obtained a passport, with permission, as I was not criminated, to secure for myself all I could of my family estates. The barriers were now open; and, with a few faithful, though humble well-wishers, who had served in my regiment, I set out on the memorable journey which was to decide the fate of my family. Within a few leagues of the chateau I unexpectedly encountered Valrive, doubtless eagerly hastening to join the plunderers. The meeting was a thunderbolt to both of us. He, like myself, had companions, but they were less numerous, and probably worse armed, for he accosted me with profuse testimonies of respect. Each was yet to learn what was passing at the chateau. Alas, *I* learned it too soon from you! I had firmness enough to dissemble. I parted with you—Oh God! let me not recollect the bitterness of that moment, or the horrible ones that succeeded it! Doomed to see my own estates a scene of bloodshed and rapine; an assassin in every vassal, and a spy in every human face; for three weeks I struggled vainly against evils no courage could guard me from, no prudence could avert. With the same assiduity that I sought my father, he sought to conceal himself; it was my fate at last to find him in an obscure hovel, sick, languishing, disabled; with no other companion than a poor ecclesiastic, nearly under the same circumstances with himself, and no other guard than the charitable hospitality of an individual, who, though low-born and low-bred, still cherished a spark of the Divinity.

"During that period which preceded the day when I followed a parent to the grave, I had long and melancholy leisure for explanation; I heard with horror the avowal of crimes of which I would now willingly bury the recollection. My father, notwithstanding all the precautions that attended your birth, had long learned to doubt whether those crimes had attained their fruition: a doubt, the sight of you and your likeness to your mother instantaneously confirmed. Fear soon magnified every possible danger: our secret correspondence became known to him: and I learned with astonishment that he tore you from your home chiefly because he suspected Dorsain and yourself of influence enough to make his son an accessory in his punishment.

"Heaven was gracious! for it permitted him to live long enough to see that son acquitted, by his misfortunes, of the imputed guilt; to see him a voluntary sharer in his parent's sufferings!—proscribed, impoverished!—I at length received his last sigh!—it was not a painful one, for the bitterness had been exhausted in those that preceded it. To him reason had long been but the instrument of remorse, and life only desirable as a barrier against the dark chasm of eternity!

"Deeply did I meditate over the obscure grave fate at length allotted him.—Oh, Constance! there are moments when the illusions of this world fade into nothing, and that only is real which is to come!"

"Yes, there are dear and sacred realities, even in this world," cried Constance, as she cast her eyes on Dorsain, whom tender anxiety had brought in search of her. "When the virtues of a parent spread a venerable and protecting shade over youth; when youth is employed, like Valmont's, in assuaging the sorrows, or smoothing the death-bed, of a parent; these are the realities that give at once a glory and a grace to life!"

Dorsain, who, in the wan countenance of Valmont at first hardly recognized the blooming young man he had formerly seen, received him generously to his heart; and Constance now, with tender emotion, noticed the change in his person.

"From the day I lost my father," said he, "I had no object in life, but to pursue my way hither. My name was now added to the list of the proscribed, and I had neither passport nor protection. My journey was necessarily on foot, and the hazards I encountered made it both circuitous and fatiguing. Conscious that my person would be universally known within my own estates, I thought not of venturing near them till dark: but I had previously overtasked my strength, and it was midnight ere I arrived here; an hour when I feared to alarm you. Immoderate fatigue compelled me to take a repose which lasted somewhat longer than I intended; and when I awoke, I found my limbs stiff at once with weariness and cold. I had, nevertheless, a double incitement to seek you—justice and love! My father, well aware of the dangers to which his principles would expose him in a national contest, had long ago vested large sums of money in foreign banks. To me, in the article of death, he entrusted the securities—you may well judge that I consider them only as a trust.—I bring with me," continued he, smiling, "memorandums, that will enable my Constance to make a poor man rich, if her heart remembers the affiance which, in his more prosperous days, he sealed upon her hand!"

Ah! the heart of Constance remembered it well! Her hand again joyfully confirmed it. Moderately rich in the gifts of fortune, with spirits subdued, not embittered, by suffering; ennobled by their virtues, and happy in the exercise of them; Constance, Dorsain, and Valmont, looked on man with benevolence, and to heaven with veneration: and though driven like our first parents from their native home, yet did innocence and love still find, amid the wilderness of life, a spot on which to create their own Eden!

THE OFFICER'S TALE.

CAVENDISH.

He, who with tender delicacy bred,
Was nurs'd in luxury, on dainties fed;
And, when still evening summon'd him to rest,
Sank in soft down upon his mother's breast,
Must—Ah, what must he not?—

POPE'S HOMER.

"AND shall I wear my new clothes? And shall I have a watch that will go? And shall I keep it myself all day,—and hang it at my bed's head at night? And won't the big boys pinch me, and beat me, and take it from me?"

Such were the interrogations that burst from the heart of little William Cavendish as his maid was undressing him on the eve of that day which was to form an era in the history of his life.

"Fy, Master William!" said Mary; "I thought you had been more of a man than to cry thus. You know your papa will have you go to school, and there you will be made good."

"But I'll be good without going, Mary. Emma is not good: Emma cries: and yet they do n't send her away."

"Gracious me! Master Cavendish; your mamma would break her heart if Miss Emma were to be sent away!—Well now, go to sleep, there's my precious! 'tis but a little while between this and Christmas; and then you'll come home, and have treats and feasts, and see your pretty mamma again, and play cards with Miss Emma, and forget all about the odious school." With this wise and comfortable exhortation, Mary tucked up her little charge and departed. The poor babe's heart was full; it bounded against the bed-clothes: but that balmy goddess who delights to repose on the rosy cheek of infancy soon closed his eyelids, even while the bright dew-drop that moistened them still quivered on the lash. Morning, however, awaked little William, as it did many other Williams, once more to sorrow. As Mr. Cavendish had announced his intention of setting off early, the whole household were actually in motion before ten o'clock; and Mary, electrified by the sound of her lady's bell at so unusual an hour, hastened to prepare her little charge for his parting visit in his mother's dressing-room. Ah! how deeply did the recollection of that visit sink into the heart of the sweet boy! Long years had rolled over his head when he still remembered the soft scent of the plants and exotics with which the apartment was perfumed from the ante-chamber: he could have drawn the plan of both; have described the exact situation of the doors; the drapery of the windows; and the very corner where the little Emma, his sister, raised on cushions, sat cutting paper while nurse waited behind. In the bloom of manhood, when sorrow had struck her fangs into his heart, it still remembered the fond beatings of that moment.

A lovely young woman, whose maid was braiding her hair as it flowed over a white wrapper, started from her seat at his entrance, and folding him in her arms, poured over her darling those tears a mother only sheds. Sympathy or complaisance, however, soon produced a most audible accompaniment: and while even the manly heart of William vented itself in sobs on the bosom of his pretty mamma; while Emma, screaming aloud, clung about them both, and nurse and Mary displayed their eloquence in a most pathetic strain of lamentation; the whole group was suddenly silenced by the entrance of a gentleman in a riding-coat, and ready booted for a journey. Mr. Cavendish, for it was he himself, was in the prime of life, and had the reputation of being handsome,

> ———"But care
> Sat on his faded cheek: yet under brows
> Of dauntless courage and considerate pride."

He paused for a moment at the door; then passing silently across the room, continued for some time to gaze earnestly on his children and his wife. Little William involuntarily shrunk from the examination; and when, in a sober but determined tone, Mr. Cavendish inquired if he was ready, a brighter glow kindled in his cheek, and a faint affirmative dropped from his lips: while his *pretty mamma*, for so he had been accustomed to call her, and well indeed she deserved the epithet, again, in an agony of fondness, caught him to her bosom. Neither the memory nor the understanding of a boy of five years old was equal to retaining all the painful scene that followed: the image of his mother, clinging to him and bathing him with her tears, was the last that dwelt upon his eye; the voice of his father, as in an authoritative tone he commanded nurse to take away the little Emma, whose grief became too noisy, still rang upon his ear; and the carriage had driven rapidly through several streets of the metropolis, before William deigned to look around him, and inquire, in a half timid, half angry tone, "If his little horse should be of the same color with that the groom rode?"

"I do n't think you will want a horse, William," said his father, gravely: "Had I not better buy you a doll?" William's heart kindled at this insult, which he perfectly comprehended.

"I have seen *you* cry," replied he, sullenly.

"Indeed!"

"Aye; not like Emma, nor mamma; but your eyes were wet."—Mr. Cavendish turned them on his son: there was probably somewhat in their expression that the latter understood: it is even possible that they were not then dry.

"You are now going, my dear William," said his father, after a pause, "to know the value of time: it is proper, therefore, that I should give you your watch. Examine it: does it please you?"—Enchanted at the sight, William had at first no voice for thanks.

"The watch is very beautiful! but I do n't like the seal, papa," said he, after a quarter of an hour's rapture had left him leisure to discover the faults of his new acquisition.

"And why so, my dear?"

"It has no coat of arms."

"And who taught *you* to know that?"

"Mamma.—Mamma gave Emma one."

"I have none to give, my dear boy," said Mr. Cavendish, who had his reasons for the omission. "You must learn to deserve one. In the meantime I will strive to give you something better:—you shall have a head and a heart."

"I 'd rather have a coat of arms," said the boy.

The seminary to which Mr. Cavendish conducted his son could not properly be termed a school. Situated in the bosom of a rich and lovely country, at the distance of seventy miles from London, on the edge of the New Forest, it had every advantage that an expensive establishment could afford; and it had one which all expensive establishments do not afford,—a preceptor who knew how to blend softness and indulgence with the steady judgment that prunes, without blighting, the exuberant blossoms of youth. Of twelve boys, little Cavendish was by much the youngest: his tender years seemed to privilege those stipulations which his father made in his favor, and he was received by his school-fellows rather as their plaything than their companion. Inheriting his mother's soft and delicate beauty, he was, indeed, upon the point of becoming a plaything to the whole family. But William had not lived in his own without learning to be troublesome. Busy, active, assuming,—always ready to justify the baby-wrongs he dared to commit, he quickly ceased to be mamma's moppet; and as his abilities were strong, and his observation uncommon, he soon ranked with boys considerably older than himself.

Christmas is come, and past, Mary, but William does not go home: on the contrary he hears little, or nothing, from thence. Overwhelmed by a calamity of which he was an unconscious sharer, the loss of the little Emma, his sister, whom a fever suddenly carried off, both father and mother seem to have forgotten they had a son. The former has indeed once, or twice, printed him a letter; and the latter has sent him cakes, and sweetmeats, and playthings; and he has a pretty horse to ride, and goes into the parlor, and runs about the garden as much as he likes: but the garden and the parlor are not his home; and his little heart sometimes swells with an infantine presentiment of approaching sorrow. Alas! it fell upon him in its most grievous form; for what shall supply the place of a mother? William lost his ere the gloss was faded from the sables which he wore for his sister. The news, communicated with a tenderness that mother herself could scarcely have exceeded, yet burst like a clap of thunder. To him all the little wants and pleasures of babyhood had been hitherto comprised in that sweet and endearing name which he first had learned to lisp. Of all his yet unformed and floating ideas, his pretty mamma had been the central point. On her bosom he had often rested his sick head; to her bosom, in all his little sorrows, had confided his sick heart. Sacred tie! inviolable cement! whose affecting influence, if duly cherished, consecrates affection by the most holy and most pure of unions! "Poor mamma! Poor Emma!" would William repeat at intervals, long after he had lost them.—"Death, grave,—" would he then add, though in other terms, "I understand not the meaning of the words!"—Ah, William! thou art yet to learn what years may roll over thy head, and leave them still a mystery!

The sensibility of the child, more deep than could have been expected at his age, seemed to take a constitutional, rather than a mental effect; for though it was not long before he recurred to his usual sports, and even appeared to pursue them with his usual activity, yet were his slumbers often interrupted by starts: and night presenting to his imagination her visionary world, the names of his mother, or his sister, would break in imperfect accents from his lips. The gentleman to whose care he was confided, sensible of the delicacy and importance of the charge, now urged Mr. Cavendish, if not to take him wholly, at least to indulge him for a time with that for which he so passionately longed: and it was at length announced to William that he should return *home*. But the little boy of five years old was now six; and reason was beginning to dawn upon the first impressions of nature. To the sense of restraint which his father's presence had formerly inspired, a vague and indistinct fear of him now succeeded. A stern brow, an authoritative tone, an air of abstraction that childhood comprehends not, and all the accidental variations which a suffering mind impresses on the features, were magnified, through the medium of the boy's imagination, into something so terrific, that his cheek lost its color, and his heart seemed to endure a sudden compression, when, on a fine morning in October, he was summoned from the play-ground to attend his father in the parlor. In the hall he was stopped by a faithful superintending domestic, who hastily washed his little hands and face, for he had been laboring, with no small diligence, at his own parterre, and conducted him, now again rosy with exercise and trepidation, to the parlor door. William laid his hand on the lock, but ventured not quite to turn it; the gentle motion which he occasioned, however, caused it to be opened on the other side, and he suddenly found himself in the presence of two gentlemen. With a beating heart he ran towards the nearest: he was of the middle size, fair complexioned, and somewhat *em-bon-point.* The child stopped, gazed earnestly—it was not his father: but at a distance, with his back towards him, leaning his head upon his folded arms against the chimney-piece, stood another person.

"Cavendish," said the stranger, after having shaken hands with his young acquaintance, and saluted him with the title of "little man;"—"Cavendish, will you not speak to your son?"

Mr. Cavendish looked not around; but, with a repulsive motion, waived the child from him.

"Take hold of your papa's hand, my dear," said the stranger. William obeyed: the little pressure was irresistible: Mr. Cavendish raised his head, cast a momentary glance on the boy; and then, to the utter astonishment and terror of the latter, snatched him to his bosom, and gushed into an agony of tears. The joy, the trepidation, and all the various emotions of William's heart, quickly blended in a similar flow: at intervals, however, he lifted up his head to look with surprise and curiosity on his father; while the other as often turning aside the boy's curls, and gazing earnestly, seemed in every little feature to peruse some sad memorial. Sir Arthur Montague (so the stranger was named) now interposed; and after speaking to Mr. Cavendish in a language which the child understood not, began to question the latter upon such topics as were likely to interest him. With the tears of his father had evaporated the terrors of William: holding him, therefore, fast by the hand, while his eyes sparkled, and his cheek glowed, he began—no less a history than that of his own life; a history which, though according to all appearance it might have been comprised in a very small compass, yet, by the force of gay spirits, and a lively imagination, he contrived, very innocently, to embellish with enough of the marvelous to make even his father smile; while Sir Arthur, whose countenance denoted all the sweetness and vivacity of his character, was enchanted with the child.

"Montague," said Mr. Cavendish, "do you recollect the description of the interview that passed between Charles the First and his children, on the eve of his execution? Methinks that before us puts me in mind of it, —not but my head will probably be in its usual place tomorrow—but what will become of my heart?"

"You continue, then, resolved?"

"Absolutely.—Yet this boy"—

"Shall henceforward then be mine," said Sir Arthur.

"No, no," cried William, impatiently, "I will be my own papa's! You are very good-natured, but I love him best!"

"Darling of my heart!" cried his father, "cherish this love. Ah, William! when I am far away—when I have no other tie upon thee than the affecting remembrance of this hour—listen to me, my son," said he, taking him on his knee;—"I am going a long, long journey:—there will be a great deal of water between you and me—and a great many people—and there will be nobody to bless you for me, but God Almighty, and under him Sir Arthur Montague: and you must be good, my dear William, to deserve the blessing of God; and he will watch over you, and will by his power convey to my heart, in spite of the distance between us, a knowledge of all the little wants and wishes of yours. Even, my William! though you do not speak them, he will teach me how to know them; and, if I can, I will make you rich—in return you must endeavor to make me happy: Sir Arthur Montague will tell you how: follow his advice; look upon him as a father: forsake not his counsel as you value my blessing. And when you are older—when the cruel world begins to assert its influence—learn early to command your passions—to regulate your understanding—to weigh what is due to others, and to feel the sacredness of such obligations as involve the happiness of those around you.—I speak to him, dear Montague," he added, turning to the latter, "a language he can not understand: be you, at a future period, my interpreter. Above all, teach him to love one who, in every circumstance, and under every climate, will exist only for him."

The conversation that ensued between the two friends was prolonged to a very late hour, at a small inn in the neighborhood. Mr. Cavendish, on retiring, took his boy, who had been asleep for some time, to his bosom; and the next morning put him into a plain carriage and four with Sir Arthur; after which, stepping into a hack-chaise himself, he was in a few days on his passage to India.

On this second parting, so unexpected and so sudden, William was even more vehemently affected than at first. No novelty of scene, no rapidity of motion, could, for some time, awaken his naturally gay spirits, or expel from his heart the image of his parents. To the most extreme depression and tears, at length succeeded questions innumerable: and had Sir Arthur not possessed an indulgence and tenderness of temper that defied provocation, he must infallibly have lost his patience before they were half way on their journey into Cumberland. But of all men living he was best calculated to conciliate the tempers of children. Full of a sportive vivacity, more fitted to the meridian of their faculties than to those of a maturer age; complying to all their whims, fond of their prattle, skillful in their little sports, he wanted only to be known to be adored: and though William's heart was far from being very flexible, and certainly more inclined to retain deep impressions than to receive superficial ones, yet was there so winning a sweetness in Sir Arthur as subdued even him. Again the latter engaged the boy to recount the history of his hair-breadth 'scapes; amidst which, that from a troop of gipsies, who had fixed their haunt in the neighboring forest, was by far the most interesting; and one to which Sir Arthur listened with the more attention, since the circumstance had really been of consequence enough to be communicated, with all its particulars, to Mr. Cavendish, as an argument for removing the child. William, after telling of the deep and tangled hollow in which they sat, described, with no small vehemence, though not in language thus elegantly poetical, the countenance and appearance of their leader:

"Her moving lips, her caldron brimming o'er,
The drowsy brood that on her back she bore;
Imps, in the barn, with mousing owlet bred,
From rifled roost at nightly revel fed;
Whose dark eyes flash'd thro' locks of blackest shade,
When in the breeze the distant watch-dog bay'd."

Lavish and tempting had been her promises of carrying him to his papa, or rather, what in his estimation was still better, had it been possible, to his mamma. Narrowly had he, in fact, escaped the snare, and that only by the vigilance of those appointed to watch over him, from whom a fearless heart and a busy curiosity had induced him to stray. Of these qualities, however, he had ample cause to repent, when he found the troop preparing to execute by force what they could not accomplish by persuasion; and he was now pretty well convinced that this identical kettle, more wonderful in his description than that of Medea, was actually intended to boil, stew, or demolish him, in some way or the other.

"I am considering, my dear William," said Sir Arthur, after a thoughtful pause, when the latter had finished his story, "that if these wicked people ever meet with you again, they will find you out by your name; and then who can tell what may happen? Now you remember that you were christened William Montague Cavendish. To prevent mischief, therefore, we will call you, for the future, Master Montague, and that, you know, will make all safe." William's memory was, of course, not quite so retentive as Sir Arthur had chosen to suppose. Had it been so, he would have known probably that he received no such name at the font: but he was well enough amused with the change, when he found that he should gain by it several nominal brothers in the persons of Sir Arthur's children, to whom he was, in fact, very distantly related; and so early was he habituated to their name, that it did not afterwards occur to him to doubt whether he had a right to it.

With a heart that still reverted towards England, Mr. Cavendish, meantime, prepared to encounter the glowing suns of India. Difficulties, sickness, sorrows, besieged him on all sides; nevertheless, he was incited by a mighty hope—a hope of such brilliancy and magnitude, that hardly dared he unvail it to himself, much less did he venture to confide it to another. In placing his son under the protection of Sir Arthur Montague, he had done all that it was possible for him then to do in life. The general worthiness of his friend's character he well knew: he also knew that he had the art of being happy; an art, to which Mr. Cavendish, instructed by sad experience, would sometimes fantastically give a higher name: nor was he, perhaps, wholly wrong. Unblemished rectitude, moderate desires, well-regulated affections, and a train of the minor virtues, are at least necessary towards attaining it: nourished by them, it assumes their coloring, and seems itself almost a virtue.

But though the outlines of Sir Arthur's history were known to his friend, the turbulent stream of life, hurrying them far apart in society, had left him no opportunity to observe those minuter traits of character which society itself creates. To be seen familiarly leaning on the arm of Mr. Montague, the only son of a baronet, heir to four thousand a year, *et pour comble de bonheur* a captain in the Guards, had been at a very early period of life (for he was considerably the younger of the two) a dazzling distinction to Mr. Cavendish. Montague was then about eight-and-twenty, and his person was among the admired of the day. To stroll through St. James's street, or Pall-Mall, in order to display this fine person, adorned with the glittering insignia of sash and gorget; to lounge at the fruit-shop, or bet at the billiard-table, were the chief employments of his life. Of these, and other pleasures, Mr. Cavendish had sometimes been the sharer; and a friendship thus founded seemed ill calculated for duration: but that smile which the remembrance of his own boyish fopperies extorted from Cavendish was always blended with indulgence for those of his associate. He recollected in him dissipation rather than vice, idleness rather than folly; and, even in his gayest moments, a certain kindness of heart, which those who have been the object of rarely forget. The career of Mr. Cavendish's dissipation had been cut short by a prudent father; but Sir Willoughby, who knew of no possible employment that his son could have in life but pleasure, was very far from inspecting either his conduct or feelings; yet from the latter he had, perhaps, somewhat to apprehend; for an enemy had crept into the heart of young Montague, from which his modes of living seemed calculated completely to shield him.

The family of Sir Willoughby consisted, besides his son, of three daughters, the eldest of whom was one-and-twenty, and had, to use the fashionable phrase, been brought out: the two younger, tall girls yet confined to the domestic circle, were assisted in their studies by Ellen Fitzherbert, a young woman not old enough to be their governess, too old to be their friend; but who, under the title of companion, superintended their music, directed their taste in reading and elegant works, corrected their French and Italian, occasionally made their millinery, and performed such other offices, important or unimportant, in the family, as the judgment of the elder Miss Montague deemed necessary. In the features of Miss Fitzherbert there was nothing particularly captivating; but she had grace, manner, a sweet-toned voice, an exquisite taste in, and knowledge of, music; a secret consciousness of acquirements that vailed itself under the most delicate modesty, and the sort of countenance that bespeaks a heart which, already acquainted with misfortune, has closed its account with life ere that has well begun. Over the many-colored scenes to which she had been a witness during her residence in the family of Sir Willoughby, his son alone had thrown a bright tint. His person, it has been before observed, was handsome; his very fopperies were not of a disgusting kind, for he was always good-natured, always complaisant: the society he mingled in afforded him topics of conversation superior to that of a dull and libertine father, or frivolous sisters. The latter, at least the two younger ones, were charmed whenever they could get so fashionable a young man as their brother to retail the news of the day; and he had stretched his legs before the study fire many a long winter's evening, before it occurred to him to ask himself the question, of what attracted him there. For a time, he found his imagination sufficiently provided with an answer. "Dancing was a bore—he lost his money at cards—he had over-rode, or over-walked himself."—Any thing, every thing, by turns, supplied an excuse, till that hour at length arrived when the restless sentiment that had been insidiously gaining ground could no longer be mistaken; and, to his own astonishment, Mr. Montague discovered that he was in love. A thousand questions now rapidly succeed each other. "What sort of a mistress would Ellen Fitzherbert make? Was it in his power to persuade her to become such at all? And, the power supposed, had he the resolution?"—To the most material of these, that unequivocal consciousness a truly correct and chaste woman involuntarily impresses on the mind of her lover, at once replied No.

Yet Montague had not become master of his own secret, but through the medium of some of those responsive touches which the heart alone understands: and in direct opposition to every possible symptom that his knowledge of the world, and of women, had hitherto taught him to call love, he had an intuitive conviction that he was the object of it to Miss Fitzherbert. A warfare that lasted some time succeeded in the heart of Mr. Montague. Without sufficient confidence absolutely to affront the object of his passion, or vigor of mind enough to withdraw, he waited only for a species of encouragement, that should enable him to dare the first, or a return of the habitual inconstancy which would make the latter easy; but he waited in vain. And now came forward a formidable question indeed—Should he marry her?—A decided negative was the answer.—"Then I have nothing for it but a campaign in America."

To quit the dear delights of St. James'; the fashionable phalanx that, arm in arm, saunter through the Mall; to march over ice, instead of swallowing it in cream; to lie hard and live poorly; was a miserable alternative to Montague;—but it was better than a ridiculous match. Exchanging his commission, therefore, with a brother officer,—to America he went; with no other emotion on the part of Sir Willoughby, than a secret surprise that so fine a young man as his son should be baffled by a woman (for it never entered his head to doubt whether he had explained himself to her), and a surprise still more lively, that, being baffled, he should think it worth his while to fly. Yet at the very season that Mr. Montague was crossing the Atlantic to risk a life apparently so little valued; when his family were giving fine suppers in fine rooms, and his fine friends were assembled in fine clothes to eat them; while the beaux in St. James's street never missed, and the belles at the opera forgot him; in a solitary apartment of the house which he had voluntarily quitted, sat a young woman, anxiously perusing, at three o'clock in the morning, the fragment of an old newspaper, only to catch the sight of a name dear to her eyes, and which, conveyed from thence to her heart, might still its beatings, or enable her to close the lids in slumber. The hitherto prosperous Montague had been taught by the world to estimate every blessing it could bestow, save affection:—he was soon to learn the full value of that.

An expedition of hazard was undertaken by a commander whose name and misfortunes are upon record. Morasses were to be traversed, woods to be penetrated: in one of these lay ambushed a body of Indians, who announced themselves by a sudden and unexpected discharge: the greater part of the advanced guard fell before it; and, first of these unfortunate men, trampled on by his companions, and buried in a mass of dry leaves and underwood, lay Mr. Montague.

Returning life was announced only by exquisite pain: and what a life! Under the thick shade of woods that seemed to exclude human tread, and to be almost impervious to sun or star-light, the bloody hand of man had strewed carnage and desolation. To the hum of social multitudes had succeeded that profound stillness under which the stretched senses seem to ache: and the gaze he threw around presenting to him only the ghastly countenances of his fellow-sufferers, as they lay motionless and bleeding, induced him to close his eyes in silent and nameless agony. Nevertheless, bodily pain again collected sense to self; and on once more surveying his situation, he perceived that, from the nature of the ground on which he fell, he had been overlooked by the savages, whose horrible devastations were too visible in the persons of his miserable companions. It became now necessary that he should take advantage of the little daylight that remained, in order to discover, if possible, on what side the surviving Europeans had retreated. But the effort his safety obliged him to make, his weakness rendered ineffectual; and after advancing a few steps, again he fainted, and again revived. Not, however, as before, did he find himself the sole existing being: a face, cold, hideous, scarred, and of a deep copper-color, lay close to his own; and as the slow and convulsive respiration struck upon his cheek, occasioned a startling emotion that seemed once more to recall the tide of life. Again, however, the sense of pain superseded every other. The Indian, though not dead, was probably dying; *which* was to Montague hardly any longer a matter either of hope or fear, since the weakness occasioned by his own loss of blood would, he had reason to apprehend, soon prove as mortal as a more desperate wound. By a violent exertion of the little strength that remained to him, he now tore his handkerchief and linen, and, with a sort of pledget and bandage, attempted to stop the effusion. Near the Indian lay a wicker bottle filled with spirits, of which he tasted, and once more began to breathe freely. So too did his copper-colored neighbor; who, opening a pair of wild and ferocious eyes, rolled them upon him with a stare of astonishment, and a convulsive sort of grin, that seemed the result of mingled pain and apprehension. From a companion whose complexion denoted him hostile, Montague, however, soon discerned that he had nothing to fear. One of his arms had been broken by a musket-shot, the other had received a deep wound from a hanger, and both seemed almost useless. Silently and watchfully, therefore, the two strange associates continued to gaze on each other. The Indian was unarmed, but Montague still retained his sword; and the former appeared perfectly sensible of his own defenceless situation, as well as of the sort of forbearance which he observed in the countenance of his adversary; of whom, by supplicating looks, and some inarticulate phrases, he at length implored mercy and assistance. The kindness of heart which was ever a part of the character of Mr. Montague, now reminded him that this savage, uncouth indeed and hostile, was yet a human being; evidently very young, perhaps not merciless himself. Tearing, therefore, a further portion of his linen, he made a feeble effort to bind up the arm of his fellow-sufferer: but while yet employed in this humane exertion, his head once more become giddy, his sight failed; and the same hideous yell that had declared the approach of the savages, and which now seemed to burst from some spot closely adjoining, was the last idea that impressed itself on his receding senses.

That horrible war-whoop which had appeared the knell of death, he, on his revival, perceived, with astonishment, to have been, in fact, the signal of deliverance. A faint consciousness of having attempted some kindness, and of having probably received some, passed across his mind; and the grim countenance of his former companion who, stretched on skins, lay not far distant, at length ascertained his uncertain recollections. The young savage, to whom he indeed owed his life, now again attempted to make himself understood, in a jargon which Montague with difficulty discovered to be French: of this, indeed, a few broken words alone were intelligible; but they were words of amity and protection; and the heir of Sir Willoughby, the gay, the gallant, the luxurious Arthur Montague, stretched on the ground in the bosom of a desert, barely shielded from the inclemency of the weather, now owned with gratitude the mercy of a savage; and secretly lifted up his heart to that Being, who, in the most ferocious state of society, yet binds man to man by the sacred sense of obligation.

The history of five succeeding years was simply that which is common to every European prisoner whom, for whatever reason, the semi-barbarous tribes of Indians that frequent the back settlements agree to spare. To liberate him was not within the power of Wissekaw,—so his young protector was called: and an attempt to escape, as they soon removed into the interior of the country, would infallibly have thrown him into the power of some other savage nation, or have exposed him to the most merciless revenge from those with whom he resided.

Thus situated, "his final hope seemed flat despair." Yet while the gratitude of the young Indian, that sentiment which, to the disgrace of civilization, is often found most forcible in savage bosoms, held out a glimmering ray, Montague continued to suffer. Inured to hardships, and with a skin little fairer than that of his companions, he saw himself daily dragged further and further from social intercourse, and plunged into those recesses where nature seems to delight in solitude. Yet it is not, perhaps, in the bosom of society that man learns most truly to appreciate himself. When his eye seems to wander over immensity—when his imagination catches visionary images of the sublime—when he looks above, around, beneath him, and seeing that all is great, yet feels within that intellectual principle which is greater still; it is then that, in direct opposition to the influence of the world, he instinctively becomes sensible of the insignificance of his frame, and of the grandeur of his mind. That of Montague was not calculated for lofty flights; yet did it sometimes soar a pitch beyond its native vigor; till the more active principle that ever lived in his heart would suddenly bring forward the image of distant England, and of Ellen Fitzherbert, and tempt him to renounce a being that seemed prolonged only to suffer. It was on these occasions that Wissekaw gave him lessons of a fortitude which Europeans comparatively so little understand. Wissekaw had more sprightliness and spirit of inquiry than falls commonly to the share of North American savages.—Having frequently accompanied his father to the French forts adjacent, the traffic there carried on had given him some vague ideas of European manners; and though curiosity rarely forms any part of the character of these wandering tribes, the want of it springs probably more from their total ignorance of the first rudiments of what they see and hear, than from a natural defect. Man seldom desires to know that of which he does not already indistinctly comprehend a little; and comprehending a little, perhaps as seldom stops there. The uncouth language in which Montague and his protector conversed became, in course of time, perfectly intelligible to both. Kindness insensibly produced familiarity, and familiarity led to confidence. Wissekaw was not without his mortifications; and he the more readily entered into those of his associate, as they were of the same nature with his own; for he was himself at that very time in most grievous want of a wife. Not indeed exactly such a wife as Ellen Fitzherbert; but one that would carry his dinner when he hunted, and afterwards cook it; make his fire, and prepare his bed of skins: all which, with various other laborious and humiliating offices, he, with indignation, had been hitherto obliged to execute for himself; not having yet performed any military achievement that, in the opinion of his tribe, entitled him to such a relief.

The coarseness of Wissekaw's ideas, however, extremely offended the more delicate ones of Montague; and, as he could by no means plead that it was his intention to employ his wife in such servile offices, he strove, with great address, and with somewhat more credit to his imagination than his memory, to make his associate understand those delicate principles by which, he assured him, love was rendered, in polished countries, a sentiment of such superior vigor and importance. Kindling, like other theorists, with the fire of his own eloquence, he used every term their scanty stock of words would afford to paint that tender union of hearts, to which he declared the common and vulgar concerns of life so subordinate. He described in glowing language the sacred tie of gratitude and protection imposed on man towards those from whom he is to derive his happiness. He spoke of women as lovely in their dependence, interesting through their weakness, and most entitled to adoration when with blushes they bestow the grateful and undivided preference which constitutes the charm of love. He spoke, in short, as hundreds have spoken and daily speak; nor was Montague the first man who has talked by one system, and lived by another: but Wissekaw, who always understood most literally what came at all within the sphere of his comprehension, was so impressed, so affected with the ardor of his manner, and the fire of his eyes, that he insisted on their stopping to interchange upon the spot fresh tokens of eternal amity; and took an oath, according to the most sacred forms of his country, to effect the escape of his prisoner on the very first possible opportunity.

An engagement thus voluntary, and which certainly incurred a risk to him who tendered it, since Wissekaw was far from possessing authority enough to shelter himself from the resentment of his father, extremely affected Montague, and a considerable time elapsed ere the ardors of a first emotion subsided in either bosom.

"I shall see my country then again!" said the young Englishman, fixing his eyes, though their sense was lost in abstraction, upon the blue mountains that bounded the horizon, and the extended "contiguity of shade" that intervened.—"Yet when returned to England, what am I to do there?"—This sentence was so short, that Wissekaw believed he perfectly understood it, and the answer was painted most expressively upon his face. Montague, whose thoughts had wandered wide from their first point, only smiled at the simplicity of the savage, and shook his head.

"I am very rich," said he, after a pause, "and she has nothing."

"Ah ke bonheur!" exclaimed Wissekaw, in his uncouth dialect.

"She is friendless, and I am the son of a great chief."

"Ah ke bonheur!" again repeated the Indian.

Montague gently represented to him that he had mistaken the word, which, it was evident, ought to have been malheur.

"No understand," said Wissekaw, very gravely: then rolling his eyes with profound earnestness, as if to sum up all he could recollect of the preceding discourse; "White man," he added, in broken French, "love de woman to make happy. Stranger no care for her, he make friend:—she poor—he much glad—he make rich—he make de happy himself—Wissekaw much glad too."

Montague felt feverish and embarassed. It was, indeed, no easy matter to descend from the sublime theory of passion and generosity to those qualifying clauses which make practice appear, in the case of the individual, often so utterly improper. And though Wissekaw had a very acute understanding, and even some idea of the power of the affections and the pleasure of obliging, yet these notions being so crude as to attach themselves almost wholly to actions, instead of words, Montague insensibly plunged deeper and deeper into what he deemed the necessary distinction between them; partly for the pleasure of developing his own system, and partly for that of enlightening the savage, of whom he was fully resolved to make a proselyte. In this project he would most probably have succeeded, but for an accident that happened in the interim; which was simply that of his becoming a proselyte himself;—in other words, he grew convinced that nothing in life could be so rational as to live for Miss Fitzherbert. From the moment that this idea acquired a decided influence, sleep fled from his night, and quiet from his day. The food which toil before had rendered sweet grew tasteless; one form alone floated before his imagination, and one only view engrossed his heart. It was not disappointed. Accident carried them not long after to that part of the banks of the Ohio where the Indians are accustomed to traffic: the opportunity was favorable; Wissekaw proved faithful to his promise; and Montague, after rewarding the kindness of the generous savage, at length turned his eyes around, and once more, with wonder and delight, saw himself encircled by Europeans. Anxious, and even painful, was the joy that took possession of his heart, when, after a short passage across the Atlantic, a stage-coach, into which, as it traveled all night, he had thrown himself on his arrival in England, set him down, at eight o'clock in the morning, in the center of that immense metropolis which for nearly six long years he had not beheld. A December fog, dense, yellow, heavy, hung over it: while the rays of a joyless sun penetrated far enough to gild the tops of the chimneys, but without power to warm the shivering beings that crept along the streets: some of them in color not unlike his friend Wissekaw; but they were less fortunate, for they were not born in the wilds of America.

From Aldersgate Street to May Fair would once have been no inconsiderable walk for a St. James's Street beau: this, however, was effected: but to effect an immediate entrance into the magnificent mansion of Sir Willoughby Montague seemed an enterprise infinitely more difficult: for the porter, not at all impressed with the complexion, dress, or address of his visitor, would have shut the door in his face, had not a house-maid, who was sallying forth with a pail, nearly fallen flat upon hers, with astonishment and terror, at what she suspected to be the young captain's ghost. Yet was it chiefly by his voice that she recognized him; for his once handsome person had undergone a sufficient alteration, during his residence with his copper-colored friends, to excite mirth, and even a momentary incredulity, in the minds of his English ones.

In the family of Sir Willoughby some considerable changes had taken place. His eldest daughter was dead, the second was married, the third lived with her sister in Cavendish Square, and Ellen Fitzherbert lived, as it appeared, no where: for of her not the least mention was made by Sir Willoughby, who, himself a cripple with the gout, and provided with a superintendent for his household that rendered daughters superfluous, seemed to think that while he, his mansion, and his equipages, remained above ground, all that was material in life might be said to be *in statu quo*. So thought not his son, however. Turning with disgust from those splendid apartments which neither health, virtue, nor the affections illumined, he staid only long enough with his father to show that respect which the character demanded; and, having announced his approach by a hasty message, eagerly repaired to Cavendish Square, where he doubted not he should gain some intelligence of her whom he sought. His foot was almost on the steps of the house, when a splendid footman brushed hastily by him, with a most formidable rap; he was followed by two females, in one of whom Montague had scarcely discovered his youngest sister, altered and grown tall, when, by her side, pale, trembling, and ready to sink at sight of him, his heart, after a moment's pause, recognized Miss Fitzherbert. Hers had not been so dilatory: dress, distance, the lapse of time, the impression of suffering, all that changes man to the eye of man, yet obliterates him not from the memory of fond and faithful woman. Forgetful of decorum, Montague snatched her to his bosom; and the embrace mutually exchanged gave them as decidedly to each other as though a thousand vows had passed between them:——those that passed soon after, were irrevocable.

The match, however, was prosperous only in affection: it was in the power of Sir Willoughby to bequeath almost the whole of his estate from his son; and, by the exertion of that power, the latter found himself, not many years after, a baronet, whose whole riches consisted in a tender wife and three fine children; an income of about four hundred per annum in the "green solitudes" of Cumberland; a house little better than a farm, with the usual appendages of pigs, poultry, paddocks, and cows. The world was not sparing in its comments, either on the conduct or fate of Sir Arthur. The higher ranks censured his folly; the lower bewailed his misfortunes: the one considered him as deserting his duties; the other as robbed of his enjoyments: they were, perhaps, equally erroneous in their judgments; for neither class remembered that the man who is active in a narrow sphere, does more, in all respects, both for himself and others, than he who slumbers in an extensive one: and that the obscure Sir Arthur Montague, adored by his wife, honored by his children, cherished by his acquaintance,—the best master, the best magistrate, the best man within his circle,—might justly claim, not merely a higher, but a happier rank in society than had ever been enjoyed by the profligate father, the hard landlord, the corrupt senator, the long debilitated, and always narrow-minded baronet, then lying in state in May Fair.

It was at this period of Sir Arthur's life, that chance brought Mr. Cavendish, who was making the tour of the lakes on horseback, once again within his neighborhood. Mr. Cavendish had himself been then married somewhat more than a twelvemonth; had a very young and exquisitely beautiful wife, a splendid establishment, and enough of the world in his character to look with surprise and concern upon the lot of his friend: four years after, he entrusted to the protection of that friend his only and darling child.

Ellen, for she was still Ellen in heart and conduct, though the courtesy of the world called her my lady, received the boy with a tender sigh, to think that he should at so early an age want protection; and little Montague, for by that name he was now known, soon found himself perfectly at home among his young associates. Sir Arthur, who, with an affectionate heart, had both from nature and education a bounded mind, presided over their sports, and was, in fact, only the overgrown boy of the group. He delighted to ramble with them round the borders of the beautiful lake near which his house stood, to paddle with them on the water, to climb through the adjoining copse to the rude brow that overlooked the valley,

> "And drink the spirit of the mountain gale."

The care of instruction was consigned to the curate of the village, a man well fitted to the task both in learning and merit; while Sir Arthur, after a day spent either in the pursuits of benevolence, or the gayety of childhood, sat down, well pleased of an evening, to look in the eyes of a wife who lived but in his,—happy through the mere expansion of his own feelings, and the pleasure of making happy. It is not with impunity, however, that man procrastinates either in his pursuits or his morals. The years that Sir Arthur had spent in an irresolution but too well understood by its object, had neither turned the head, nor broken the heart of the woman he loved; but they had secretly snapped those finer springs of the constitution which neither heart nor head can wholly repair. The well regulated mind of Ellen Fitzherbert had taught her to struggle with an ill judged passion: it would have taught her to conquer it, had her lover's mind been equally vigorous; but the sickly hope which his conduct was ever calculated to cherish had tainted her stronger faculties, and happiness itself came too late. A consumptive tendency, not natural to her constitution, yet seemed hereditary to her children, and at the moment of giving them life, death sprang forth with it hand in hand. The malady at length seized upon herself. She suddenly grew far more beautiful than she had ever yet been; her complexion cleared; her eyes assumed a sparkling luster which they had not before known; her frame wasted into delicacy, her voice softened into languor; and a short cough, accompanied with a bright pink upon her cheek, announced the foe within,—not approaching in darkness and terrors, but cruelly borrowing the bright colors of youth, of health, and loveliness. Sir Arthur took the alarm;—air, diet, exercise, and perfect peace, were at once prescribed: but neither air, exercise, nor diet prevailed; the peace, indeed, was perfected.

"Let me look at her again!" said her weeping *protegé*, the little Montague; "let me look at her again! I never saw my own mamma when she was dead; but I dreamed of her often; and when I waked I prayed: and I am sure God heard me more then than he has ever done since, for I felt him in my heart."—The boy spoke truth! Sacred surely are the first tears we shed over those whom we fondly love. "They turn thought inward," and woe to such as rob mortality of its earliest purifying tribute!

With his wife vanished all that was bright or marking in the life of Sir Arthur; her understanding had directed, her activity had given spring to, the goodness of his heart. Her acquirements, her sprightliness, her affection, had invisibly presided over all his hours: the heaviness of character, often either incidental or natural to man, verges, in declining years, either to torpidity or vice; it is then that active and well-informed woman so happily fills the chasm of life, and, without being obtrusively any thing, becomes, in fact, almost every thing to her household. Sir Arthur felt acutely a loss which he justly deemed irreparable: but time, that meliorates all griefs, insensibly subdued his; and his agricultural pursuits, which had long filled up his leisure, became enlarged by an accession of fortune bequeathed him through his youngest sister. With the other he kept up no intercourse from the time of his own marriage: a degradation which, as she hoped her son would be heir to Sir Willoughby, she had chosen to unite with the latter in resenting. That son, indeed, lived not to enjoy his advantages; but the lady, who considered her brother as a cipher in her world, was so indignant at the disposition of her younger sister's property, that the breach, before sufficiently wide, became insurmountable, and each seemed willing to obliterate all recollection of the other. It is, perhaps, not unworthy of notice in the eventful history of human life, that this same woman, on becoming a widow some few years after, married a man as scantily endowed as Ellen Fitzherbert with the gifts of fortune, and far beneath her in those of nature.

Time, so rapid in its flight, is nevertheless often so uniform in its pace, that the accumulation of years alone tells us they are past. Montague was a young man, and Sir Arthur an old one, before he was quite prepared for either circumstance; yet even that indolence which daily grafted itself more and more on his character did not prevent his casting many a long and anxious look towards India. The continued residence of young Montague in his family matured a growing evil, which, though he had penetration enough indistinctly to foresee, he wanted judgment, and almost power, to obviate. The child had been irresistible, the boy was captivating, but the young man was already proud, impassioned; highly gifted by nature with every grace of person, and every promise of mind.

Sir Arthur knew the peculiar circumstances that attended his *protegé*: he saw that the elder Mr. Cavendish, whatever were his plans, had set his fortune, his life, nay, even the fate of his darling son, upon a cast; and that the latter was either to be great, or nothing. The career of his father had not, at first, been prosperous. In going to India he had rested his hopes upon a relation, whose rank and influence rendered every thing possible to him: that he had once been tenderly beloved by that relation he well knew; but he forgot to calculate the immense change that had since taken place in himself. When Mr. Cavendish was first noticed by Lord Montresor, he was young, gay, happy, full of promising talents, of high expectations, of never-failing spirits; inheriting from his father a great commercial concern, and a property almost immense, there was scarcely any thing which his friends did not hope from him, perhaps nothing he did not hope for himself. He carried to India a broken fortune, a proud spirit, an embittered heart; no health, no gayety, no happiness. Under these circumstances it was not wonderful that Lord Montresor found it difficult to recognize the young man whom he had formerly distinguished. He received him, however, with kindness, and would have employed him in a line that was likely one day to raise him to all that he could desire; but the vigor of Mr. Cavendish's mind was, for a time, absorbed; and the governor-general soon discovered that he was not to be employed. Unable to judge whether he had made his fate, or his fate had made him, Lord Montresor, nevertheless, did not forget that he was unfortunate and estimable; he continued, therefore, to retain him near his person, and to amuse him with hopes for several years.

Those years were almost a fearful blank in the life of Cavendish. Sometimes, starting from his day-dream, he would indulge the secret fever of his mind in long and wild letters to his son: then, recollecting that son was yet a child, he would again start to think that he must soon become a man;—soon wake to all the strong and turbulent influence of contending passions;—wake to feel

> "The proud man's scorn, th' oppressor's contumely,
> The pangs of despised love."——

He would then dash away the pen—climb, in despite of a tropical sun, to some point whence he might view the white sails of the vessel that conveyed the dispatches, and, as they lessened before him, breathe upon his child a blessing too heart-breaking to be fashioned into words.

Of letters thus written, a very few consequently ever reached Sir Arthur; nor had he discrimination enough to distinguish, in those that did, the effusions of a perturbed recollection from a sober and rational injunction. The energy with which Mr. Cavendish ever dwelt on one important secret, and the wild solicitude with which he enforced the necessity of its concealment from his son, rested, therefore, habitually and forcibly on the mind of his friend; and Montague himself was now become so tenderly endeared to the latter, that hardly could the beating heart of the father have claimed a fonder interest in his future fate. That formidable future, already, therefore, pressed hard and close upon Sir Arthur, when a lingering but dangerous malady, with which he was attacked, by seeming to close the account to himself brought to his imagination, with painful earnestness, the evils it might produce to his *eléve.* Of the baronet's landed property, only that small part was alienable which he had himself, by purchases, added to the estate, and of personal fortune he could hardly be said to have accumulated any. Not that he was wholly devoid of the wish to do so, or believed himself without the prospect. But Sir Arthur was among that unlucky, though numerous class of gentlemen-farmers, to whom every season is constantly adverse; whose crops are always spoilt by too much sun, or too much rain; too obstinate an adherence to an old plan, or the too zealous pursuit of a new one. He was besides generous and indulgent to a fault; consequently so often plundered, that no man had more reason to congratulate himself that there was a place in another world in which to garner his treasures, where "moths do not corrupt, nor thieves break in and steal;" for none such did he ever find in this. But as it is the property of some natures to sweeten every thing with which they come in contact, so even dishonesty and idleness, in passing through the guileless medium of his imagination, seemed to lose somewhat of their grossness, and presented themselves to his judgment in qualifying and gentler forms. From this state of tranquillity, and all the sweet associations attendant upon a kind and benevolent temper, Sir Arthur suddenly sunk to languor and despondency. That calm sunshine with which the latter years of his life had been gilded, seemed wholly overcast; life itself hung by a frail and uncertain tenure; and he reflected, with poignant anxiety, that, in quitting it, he left there a young man of high passions, and a cultivated mind, without a profession, and without a friend.

It is the misfortune of characters in which reflection does not predominate, that the necessity for it is peculiarly adverse to its operation: perhaps in the whole circle of human, or rather inhuman employments, that of war was among the last which Mr. Cavendish would have chosen for his son; yet, from the powerful influence of early habit, and the confused state of Sir Arthur's ideas, it was the only one that presented itself to his imagination. The military art he had, both theoretically and practically, had sufficient opportunity to acquire, and, as he now believed, most fortunately, to impart. Under his auspices Montague had early learnt to play the soldier; and when ripening years transferred the sports of his childhood to a theme for his feelings, the baronet had found some difficulty in repressing that passion for arms which his own discourse first instilled. Glowing with the enthusiasm natural to a young and inexperienced heart, often did the young man tread in imagination the deserts of America, or the burning sands of India; impatient to spread the blessings of civilization and humanity, without being aware how frequently the means defeat the end, or how little that end has been even proposed by the polished savages who claim the title of conquerors.

The propensity which Sir Arthur had been at some pains to extinguish, he now, in the tumult and agitation of his mind, believed he had no other alternative than to rekindle. That of his young friend, however, he discovered, with regret, to be no longer directed to its former bent: nearer views and softer wishes had taken place of the bold career that fancy had formerly pictured: and though Montague conceded to a plan, against which, indeed, he could not reasonably remonstrate, he conceded only. His character was of that mixed kind in which the stronger passions were continually blended with those minor ones contracted by habit and situation: for the former he had already found an object; the latter became a lurking poison in his blood which Sir Arthur possessed not acuteness enough to discover. Alas! in the delicate office of educating the heart, so many nicer feelings are a necessary supplement to reason, that few indeed are the beings adequate to the task!

It was not, however, the fate of Montague only that strewed the pillow of Sir Arthur with thorns. He had a yet more delicate, though not more interesting charge to divide his attention; a charge over which he meditated with an anxiety he had never before experienced, in proportion as he became more sensible of the hazards attendant upon it. Amidst the changes that had taken place in the baronet's family upon the death of his wife, had been the removal of a young creature early committed to the protection of the latter. Miss Rochford, though even nobly descended, had, by the folly and dissipation of her father, been born under circumstances of peculiar distress. She was an orphan; and even in childhood blessed, or cursed, as fortune should decide, with that irresistible beauty which so often dazzles judgment, and confounds even wisdom. Lady Montague had been the saving angel of her mother; who, though educated in the highest and happiest hopes, finally reverted to this dear, and once humble friend, as the sole protector of her child; nor was the appeal fruitless even when the heart that made it ceased to beat; since to cherish the little Clara as a wife for one of her own sons, was among the few romantic projects which Lady Montague ever formed. The overwhelming succession of calamities that swept both mother and children to one common grave, left to Sir Arthur the painful task of restoring Miss Rochford to those who were called her natural friends. But he had soon too much reason to regret having given up his lovely charge. Under the roof of her aunt, Lady Selina, the sweet child "learned to sigh ere she could know to sin;" and was finally, by a concurrence of events, returned to the guardianship of the good baronet, with an earnest request that he would place her, for a small stipend, under some respectable protection in the country. Happy was the day of her emancipation to the little Clara, who, in the bosom of nature and solitude, had early acquired those simple tastes and warm affections which, with a moderate degree of cultivation, give mind its best character, and life its truest zest.

In receiving her again to his protection, Sir Arthur was not, however, quite satisfied that he acted wisely. With the indecision, therefore, common to bounded minds, he attempted to find a medium where judgment would have told him that there could be none: and confining his precautions to the single one of removing her from his own roof, he encouraged the hope that time and chance, if not the early return of Mr. Cavendish, would wholly separate her from Montague. Time fled, indeed, with rapid wing, but brought with it only a painful and increasing surmise that it was no longer in the power of chance to alienate two hearts thus early interwoven. Mutual misfortunes, personal charms, and habits of intimacy, had, in fact, all united to create a passionate love: and while each hovered around the bed of their mutual protector, his anxious eyes, quickened by apprehension, became but too fully apprised of the secret. It was a discovery peculiarly distressful. The mysterious circumstances that attended Montague's situation hardly left Sir Arthur the power of regulating his fate in any instance; yet such was the exigency of the occasion, that he seemed on the point of deciding it in all. And even the same cruel necessity that was about to plunge the young man into the world made the prohibition still less likely to be observed, which would tear him from the only individual remaining in it that he loved.

To the powerful passion that thus reigned in his heart, there was yet, however, a counterpoise. Clara, though ill able to make the fortune of the man she loved, was not wholly dowerless; she was, besides, allied to a family at once narrow-minded and arrogant, and to them she would be responsible even for the conduct they deigned not to regulate, the fate in which they would never, probably, sympathize. Dear, therefore, as she was to her lover, Sir Arthur had no difficulty in perceiving that he revolted from the idea of marking his own outset in life by sacrificing any advantage she might possess there. It was far otherwise with Miss Rochford. Pride, interest, necessity, all make imperious claims on man, the force of which his early knowledge of the world disposes him rarely to deny: but the heart of woman naturally and powerfully inclines to the side of tenderness, since almost every good she expects in life is to be derived from the affections she feels, or those she inspires. Clara had yet learned to make no other estimate of life itself. The house of Lady Selina, to which she was, of necessity, about to return, was hateful to her imagination. Accustomed to believe that she should ever find her pleasures in the circle of her duties and her ties; gentle, natural, attached to her benefactor, to her lover, to simple and domestic enjoyments; she neither sought nor desired any thing beyond them.—Guileless and unadulterated heart, should there be found one of either sex cruel enough to sully thee, how deep would be the sin! how severe ought to be the self-condemnation!

Sir Arthur reasoned ill, but he always felt rightly; and it was only necessary that any subject should become a question of the heart, and not of the head, to make him view it in its true light. Little as was his knowledge of the world, his observation still less, he was nevertheless too well informed to indulge those chimeras which the ardent imagination of a young man delighted to paint. He was aware that promotion was far from being the regular consequence of merit in a military life; and was not quite sure, though inclined to believe it, that love continued the inseparable attendant upon matrimony: these circumstances considered, his opinion was decisive. Yet, though refusing to sanction their contract, the lovers observed, with pleasure, that he sympathized in their hopes: and hardly was the prayer each breathed to heaven for the happiness of the other more fervent than that they mutually offered up for their indulgent and generous benefactor.

The negative of Sir Arthur was decisive, however, only as it respected Mr. Cavendish.—"By what right, my children," would he say, "can I authorize a tie thus important? How shall I rob a parent of his first and dearest prerogative, and fix the fate of that son for whom his father is content to become an exile and a wanderer? Address yourself, my dear William, to yours! You only are left to him in the wreck of life: do not therefore rob him of all to which he clings; and be well assured that both your moral and worldly prosperity will depend on his approbation.—My little fortune or credit shall, in the interim, be employed in your service; and my sweet Clara will guard for her lover a heart which he will every day learn better how to deserve!"—That of Montague beat with complicated feelings as he obeyed the injunction of Sir Arthur; and the first genuine and frank communication of mind from a son to a father was compounded of all those various and interesting shades which their relative situations could not but create. Hurried away by a strong and impetuous passion, he at one moment demanded its object, as entitled to supersede every claim and every duty: those claims and duties then took their turn in his heart; a thousand imperfect, though affecting recollections, passed across it,—and the image of the distant, perhaps suffering being to whom he was addressing himself, suffused his eyes with tears. He saw nothing—heard nothing but his father: when, at the very crisis of filial affection, the idea of a despot, crushing his hopes, and annihilating his right of choice, awakened that pride which ever formed a decided feature of his character, gave a new color to his style, and breathed over it estrangement and haughtiness. "I throw myself," concluded he, at length, "on your tenderness—or rather on your justice. I implore my happiness at your hands, as the dearest claim of my birth, and the richest benefit you can bestow. Imperfectly as I am informed of the motives that detain you from your country and your son, and painful as is the temporary alienation imposed on me, I pledge myself so to fill up life that my father shall never regret he gave mine a charm, nor blush should it be in his power to give it a distinction.—Yes!" continued he, with a proud but generous enthusiasm, "if your son prove not honorable, *renounce him!*"

The deep responsibility of him who challenges happiness as a reward of those virtues he is yet to prove, was unknown to Montague: nor was he sensible of the full import of his letter in other particulars, till too late: he then recollected, with useless regret, that to the strength of a natural tie he had now added a voluntary appeal; that months must elapse before the packet could reach its destination, more than months before the answer to it could arrive;—and that whether Sir Arthur lived or died in the interim, conceded, or was inflexible, the *fiat* was lodged beyond his jurisdiction: nor did this now escape the notice of Sir Arthur himself, who saw with pleasure the additional obligation imposed upon the lovers: yet, as *finesse* formed no part of his character, the idea was far from having occurred to him when he dictated the address: and the letters of Montague were even accompanied by others from himself, more fully explanatory of the temper, the connections, and the heart of Miss Rochford. The deep though fruitless regret of the young man was now daily rendered more acute by her approaching departure for town; for Lady Selina, in whose character delicacy had very little share, had no sooner formed the resolution of receiving her niece at all, than she fancied that her arrangements made it necessary the latter should come to her directly. To be torn from her earliest and dearest protector would at any period have been painful to the affectionate heart of Clara; but the double separation, under circumstances thus gloomy, was peculiarly so: the indulgence of Sir Arthur's manners, and the sentiments which the lovers mutually entertained for him, had made his heart a sort of medium through which theirs could openly and freely blend; yet under his auspices they now believed they should meet no more:—sorrowful, therefore, was the parting, and ominous did the tears seem that were shed on all sides.

Sir Arthur's mind, thus relieved from the apprehension of a hasty and indiscreet union, nevertheless dwelt with sweet complacency on the hope of a future one: and had his constitution seconded the vigorons efforts he made to shake off languor and debility, his health would probably have undergone a rapid amendment. As it was, however, he did not grow worse; and the faculty began even to persuade themselves, that should his strength enable him to go through the winter, spring would do more in his favor than they had yet ventured to hope. But there was a mental malady, over which neither spring nor summer seemed likely to have a happy influence; and which daily grew more insupportable from the necessity of concealment. Money had never yet been, at any period of Sir Arthur's life, an object of consideration to him: too affluent at one time to want, and at another too moderate to spend it, he now first discovered its importance. For Montague, he was proud, delicate, nay, he would have been even profuse; and to be obliged to send him into the world with the narrow stipend annexed to a commission, was a chagrin that would very much have assisted to hasten his kind friend out of it. Yet to raise a sum that should set him above this, was, in the state of Sir Arthur's health and fortune, a matter of difficulty. Delay followed delay, and spring was already far advanced before the business seemed likely to be completed. With spring, however, returned those genial breezes which communicate their vivifying power to the heart. "Our friend will live, my dear Clara," wrote Montague: "he has to-day been rolled out in his easy chair to enjoy the balm of the sunshine. How bright to me would have been the beam had my Clara partaken it! yet in seeing the returning glow that kindled on the cheek of Sir Arthur, I think I felt a pleasure hardly second to that with which I have beheld it mantle over her own. The purchase-money for my commission is now laid down. I believe he has had some difficulties in raising it; but his attentive kindness has hitherto concealed them from me. Poverty, however, is not an evil confined to your lover, my dear Clara. From a mistake caused by negligence or haste, the agent whom Sir Arthur employs misdirected a letter, designed, doubtless, by its contents, for some unfortunate fellow like myself, and which fell into my hands. I felt a most disagreeable sensation as I returned it. It was civil, nevertheless: but still it was the language of refusal. 'Money was so scarce—his exigencies were so frequent; then he had friends who were so liberal—and a mother who could deny him nothing.'—Ah Clara! he is there more fortunate than myself, for I have no mother!"

The answer to this conveyed the first blow that had ever yet wounded the heart of Montague. Miss Rochford, still tender, still faithful, and only too timid, confessed that she had not courage to endure the censure or the raillery of her aunt; who, having noticed their correspondence, had very indignantly reprobated it; arraigned the conduct of Sir Arthur in permitting her to form an engagement so little likely to prove advantageous to either of the parties concerned, and absolutely forbade all future intercourse between them. Clara concluded with observing, that though neither her heart nor her judgment accorded with Lady Selina, who, she conceived, had a far less right to direct her conduct than Sir Arthur himself, she yet requested that the letters intended for her might be directed under cover to a third person, who was, in fact, no other than her own maid.

Not all the qualifying or gentle terms in which this information was conveyed could conceal from the jealous pride and penetration of Montague that Lady Selina had endeavored to throw him at that haughty distance in the mind of Clara, at which his own revolted. Anger, disdain, bitterness of soul, at once seized upon him. The very letter Lady Selina had read was precisely that which avowed his poverty, his insignificance. Ah! what letter could he probably ever write that would *not* avow it? How afflicting is that moment when the illusions of early youth begin to evaporate! when the cares, the anxieties, from which many a weary head and affectionate heart have been cautiously shielding us, suddenly press near and heavily upon our own! Under the roof of Sir Arthur, cherished by his fortune, and sanctioned by his name, Montague had appropriated that rank in society to which the ingenuous and deserving mind believes it has a natural claim. What was his surprise to find that he had in fact none there! Excluded, as he was informed by Sir Arthur, through the misfortunes of his family, from connections and friends, whose ingratitude had stamped them as aliens, there were moments in which a fearful surmise presented itself, which he knew not in what manner either to answer or avow. Yet engaged as his father had been in great commercial speculations, it was possible that he had been worse than *unfortunate*. "Ah, if so," sighed the indignant young man, "grievous is the lot of that child whom his parents rob of the first and dearest claim of his birth—an untainted acceptation in society!"

The amended state of Sir Arthur's health was fully necessary to enable him to endure a stroke upon his nerves for which they were ill prepared. To part with Montague for the mere marches and countermarches of a home and bloodless service was a sacrifice he had necessarily resolved upon; when he was suddenly shocked with the intelligence of an approaching war, which, as in its opening it threatened Gibraltar, had caused the regiment in which the young man was entered to be immediately drafted there. Glory, promotion, active life, and all the chimeras attendant on a bold and aspiring mind, at once sparkled before that of Montague; hard service, an obscure and stationary rank, possibly a premature fate, presented themselves to the more experienced judgment of the baronet. He had still enough of the soldier, however, in him, to know that no other arrangement could now be thought of, but that which circumstances prescribed: and he was somewhat comforted on being assured, by those who were more conversant than himself with the affairs of the world, that the movements on both sides rather announced a political maneuver than any real danger. The painful separation was, therefore, at length accomplished; and Montague, having the satisfaction of leaving his friend's health re-established, found himself in London. It was there a separation awaited him—ah, how much more exquisitely painful! every step, as it brought him nearer to the spot where Miss Rochford resided, added to the throbbings of his heart. Announced as his approach had been, though but by a hasty letter, he formed wild expectations of hearing from, or even seeing her, he hardly knew where, or how: and when the first inquiry at the hotel where he alighted produced him neither answer, nor notice of any kind, all the furies of jealousy and resentment took possession of his soul. Miss Rochford, however, could not notice a letter which she had never received ; and the information he collected at Lady Selina's door, though not calculated to soothe his impatience, quickly subdued his resentment: for he learned that both she and Clara had been for more than ten days out of town on a visit; that their return was uncertain, and that the servants left in the house had no commission to forward any letters: none, probably, were expected by one party, nor were the expectations or wishes of the other such as she dared openly avow.

Occupation, the most sovereign of all remedies for an unquiet mind, now fortunately intervened to spare that of Montague the daily painful expectations that would otherwise have preyed upon it; and the novelty of the scenes before him, together with the necessity for exertion, at once awakened his powers. Sir Arthur's tenderness had furnished him with letters of introduction to some of those who had formerly been his own intimates, and from whom, though long separated by time and circumstances, the baronet conceived he had a claim to attention. But summer was now fast approaching, and the town was thin: of the persons to whom the letters were addressed, several were absent, and others dead. Among those to whom they were delivered, a great number had such short memories, that they could with difficulty recollect their old friend Sir Arthur; and others, on the contrary, such long ones, that they were not able to forget he had been disinherited. A few, indeed, did more credit both to him and to themselves; but as they were not men of brilliant abilities, and were far advanced in life, the civilities they proffered were consequently of a cold and phlegmatic kind. Montague, therefore, soon conceiving himself neglected because he was not courted, marked them down in his imagination as superannuated and dull, and readily suffered them to escape from his memory. Such are the decisions of youth! He had in the event but too much reason to assure himself that the persons thus neglected were exactly those whose knowledge of characters and of life would, probably, had their acquaintance been duly cherished, have spared him the most bitter and well-founded regret.

Money, the grand spring of action every where, Montague soon found to be particularly necessary in London; he therefore hastened to wait on Mr. Colvil, the gentleman through whose assistance Sir Arthur had raised it; and as he called at an hour when men of business are rarely from home, he was immediately admitted. Mr. Colvil was a middle-aged man, of a genteel appearance, whose services were extremely useful to a certain description of people, and whose connections in the military line rendered his house, which was a very handsome one, particularly the resort of gentlemen in the army. Montague found him in conversation with a young man, who withdrew, on the entrance of a third person, to a window not far distant, against which he continued to lean with that sort of serious and abstracted air which proved, that though his eyes were fixed on the passengers in the street, their sense was collected inward. As Sir Arthur's name had a better recommendation to Mr. Colvil than to some of those to whom it had been lately announced, he received Montague with extreme civility; apologized for not having called on him on his arrival in town; and, after a few inquiries and common-place compliments concerning his old friend the baronet, to whom he made no doubt Montague was nearly related, informed the latter, that though, not being aware of his visit, he was unprovided with the money, it should certainly be at his command, even, if necessary, in a few hours.

"You will think of what *I* have been saying, Mr. Colvil," said the stranger, abruptly; and as if roused by the mention of money from a very uneasy contemplation.

"I really wish it was in my power, sir, to think to any good purpose," answered Mr. Colvil, with a civil smile.

"Rather say, in your will," replied the other, relapsing into gloom. Montague fixed his eyes upon him, as he spoke, with a blended emotion of interest and curiosity, which he found it the less indelicate to indulge, as it by no means seemed to embarrass its object, who was perfectly engaged with his own contemplations. He appeared about six or seven and twenty, extremely handsome, and of an easy and graceful deportment, that announced him to be above the common rank. In his dress there was nothing remarkable: but he was very pale, and an air of languor and fatigue added to the expression of chagrin that marked his countenance.

"My father," he continued in the same abrupt and impatient tone as before, "is, I have told you, still at Windsor;—my mother, on whom you know I could rely, is out of town, and the occasion is so pressing——"

At the mention of his mother, Montague, struck suddenly with the idea that this stranger was no other than the very person into the secret of whose distresses he had before inadvertently obtruded through the accident of the letter, and for whose disappointment he had then breathed a commiserating sigh, looked at him with redoubled interest.

"I am extremely sorry," returned Mr. Colvil, hesitating, as if somewhat embarrassed on finding himself between two parties for whom such opposite answers were intended, "quite concerned.—Had you allowed me any time—but, you see, my word is pledged elsewhere, sir:

and against the evening, therefore, it is impossible—totally impossible, I assure you," repeated he emphatically.

Montague, from motives of delicacy, had risen to take his leave, when the impression of the last words struck upon his heart as if directed to himself; and the oblique reference to his own claims seemed to justify his interfering.

"If," said he, turning to Mr. Colvil, from an irresistible impulse of generosity, "if a short delay on my part will enable you, sir, to accommodate this gentleman, I shall consider the trifling inconvenience as a matter of no consequence."

An electric stroke could hardly have produced a more sudden effect on both his hearers than did these few words. The young stranger, indeed, lifted up his haughty eyes with something like disdain: as they glanced over the person of Montague, however, their expression totally changed. The latter was finely formed, had from nature an air of distinction, and, besides being strikingly handsome, had an intelligence of countenance that at once denoted the character of his mind.

"I have not the honor of knowing *you*, sir," said the stranger, in a tone that proved that he thought *himself* known, "but I feel particularly obliged by your offer.—Colvil, introduce us to each other." The astonished Mr. Colvil complied: but his surprise was far inferior to that Montague felt, when he understood that this impoverished young man, whose pecuniary distresses he, in the plenitude of his wealth and power had condescended to relieve, was no less a person than the son of Colonel Mordaunt: the very officer under whom he was to serve; whose fortune was even above his rank, and whose pleasure he had vainly waited for two whole hours that very morning at the war-office. Mordaunt, who, as his manner evinced, had not doubted his being known to the stranger who had thus volunteered so extraordinary a kindness, was, if not the most astonished, certainly the best pleased of the three, at a close of a conversation which secured him the command of a sum far exceeding any calculation that had been made by him who offered it. The circumstances of Mr. Mordaunt's situation, however, seemed to ensure his responsibility; and while he, in high good-humor, drove off in an open carriage with which his groom waited at the door, Montague, who declined the offer of being set down, walked thoughtfully home to his hotel; not quite convinced that his head could be acquitted of folly upon the partial testimony of his heart.

"You have played a young man's trick, my good sir," said Mr. Colvil, by way of consoling him, as he took his leave; "but Charles Mordaunt is an honorable fine fellow, I assure you: if he is lucky, he will probably replace the sum soon; if otherwise, the trifling delay can be, as you observe, a matter of no consequence." This hint was not lost on the person to whom it was addressed; and it afforded him a melancholy conviction that whatever inconveniences might arise from the step he had just taken, Mr. Colvil would not be likely to prove himself a young man.

Beyond the calculation of, perhaps, any of the parties concerned, the gay equipage of Mr. Mordaunt set him down at Montague's door at no very late hour the next morning; when, gracefully settling every obligation but that of kindness to his new acquaintance, he invited him, after many flattering tokens of regard, to dine with a party of his brother-officers at an hotel in St. James's Street. An introduction like this was in itself distinction, and Montague immediately found it so. For what possible purpose Mr. Mordaunt could want so large a sum of money for so short a time, and why he should be communicative of his private distresses before a stranger, nevertheless, considerably puzzled one so new to life as Montague: but he was not long in discovering that the young man whom he had obliged lived in too fashionable a circle to make any secret either of his pleasures or his necessities. The love of play, in all its various forms, was evidently a mania that reigned throughout the family of the Mordaunts: and though it was, perhaps, more cautiously vailed, or spoken of with more reserve, where the colonel was concerned, the faro-table and Mrs. Mordaunt were intimately blended in the ideas of all who approached her. Enabled (for she was the colonel's second wife) by a splendid and independent fortune to supply both her own extravagance and that of her son-in-law, Mrs. Mordaunt had, indeed, so cherished a fatal propensity in the mind of the latter, as almost to expel from it every other pursuit of pleasure. As if the folly of half the night were insufficient, the whole of it was frequently spent with gay parties at his mother's villa, in the neighborhood of Windsor, whence he sometimes returned with a high flow of spirits; at others, raging with vexation, wan, languid, and exactly the being he had shown himself at Mr. Colvil's. Yet, this one vice excepted, Mordaunt wanted neither understanding, heart, nor spirit. His manners were highly ingratiating; he was much beloved by his brother officers; and the title of his friend, which, after a short acquaintance, he bestowed on Montague, gave the latter a consequence and a pleasure likely to prove but too dangerous.

Engrossed, as he could not fail to be, by a variety of concerns, Montague yet counted impatiently the days and hours of Miss Rochford's absence. The probability of leaving England without seeing her became a source of the most poignant anxiety. With the romance incidental to an impassioned mind, he began to impute to Lady Selina a thousand chimerical plans, as much beyond her capacity of inventing, as her power of executing: to assure himself that it was impossible so critical an absence could be the effect of chance; and to discover in that which a further knowledge of life would have shown him to be a very common proceeding, a deep-laid scheme against his happiness. Except in the winning of an odd trick, Lady Selina was, nevertheless, perfectly innocent of any scheme whatever. She had, indeed, wholly and positively disapproved the attachment of her niece; but she thought too little of the force of any attachment to believe it necessary she should do more than disapprove; especially a love affair, which it was so very obvious would never give her a title or a fortune. Lady Selina was, in fine, one of those insipid characters who, having neither a heart nor a head, vitiate only by creating an atmosphere in which the vital principle that should cherish every faculty of either, is wholly wanting. As her income was narrow, and her expenses great, it was her established custom to burden her friends with her company, and disburden herself of her servants, during the summer months. Her stay was every where uncertain, as it was regulated by the civilities of her hostess: and her acquaintance were exactly of that dangerous class who, loving the pleasures of the world sufficiently to sacrifice to them every thing but a certain degree of acceptation there, find in the world that with which it so frequently

> ———— "Its votaries rewards:
> A youth of folly, and old age of cards!
> Fair to no purpose, artful to no end;
> Young without lovers, old without a friend,
> A fop their passion, but their prize a sot;
> Alive ridiculous, and dead forgot."

One of these poor prizes in the lottery of life Lady Selina had, indeed, drawn: who, after having shown just spirit enough to squander a good fortune, judiciously took leave of society exactly at the period when it would otherwise have taken leave of him. But what was Lady Selina to Montague? He thought not of, cared not for her, except as the relation of Clara: and amidst the various evils with which he bewildered and tortured his imagination, that which was by far the most obvious and dangerous, a frivolous connection, was the last that occurred to him.

To Colonel Mordaunt, who had been almost constantly at Windsor, Montague had not yet had the opportunity of being presented; but the kindness of his son, and the flattering reception that kindness had secured him in the regiment, already prepared him to expect and to give far more than a common share of attention both to the commander and the duties of the service. Professional business at length, however, obliged the colonel to quit his attendance on the higher powers, and be in town. Young Mordaunt, who was zealous to present his favorite to his father, volunteered in his turn, and secured the latter a most gracious invitation to breakfast with the colonel at a coffee-house, to which it was his custom to resort whenever the pressure of affairs, or the absence of his household, made it inconvenient to him to be at home. Punctuality, however, was not among the virtues of young Mordaunt: for though he well remembered to bring the invitation, he totally forgot that he was a party concerned in it: and Montague, after vainly expecting him beyond the appointed hour, thought it more advisable to introduce himself, than to appear wanting in respect on an occasion where he could hardly show too much. His reception from Colonel Mordaunt at once convinced him that he had judged rightly. To a military air and a dignified countenance, Colonel Mordaunt united the polished manners of a court. He was much handsomer than his son, though far past the meridian of life. There was a marked penetration in his eye; and his fine features when composed, announced something of harshness, and even of austerity; but a smile was affability itself; and the flexible tones of his voice proved that he had equally studied to please and to command. Nothing, in fine, could more completely fill up Montague's idea of an officer and a gentleman than Colonel Mordaunt. If on one side the impression was thus favorable, it was obviously not less so on the other. To the colonel, who was a strict disciplinarian, and valued himself on commanding, even in the ranks, some of the finest men in the service, the tall, graceful, and manly figure of Montague proved, as his son well knew it would do, an immediate recommendation; and had he wanted a contrast, a meager and yellow ensign, who stood near, would have supplied one. The latter, however, was dismissed: and from the manner of his dismission, Montague felt that Colonel Mordaunt could certainly be proud. To the young man, however, he was, throughout the breakfast hour, courteous in the extreme. He even seemed desirous to form an estimate of his talents and his capacity: and, though a certain delicacy of mind withheld Montague from drawing conclusions too rashly in his own favor, he felt persuaded that the colonel's observations were advantageous to him.

"My son," said the latter, towards the close of a long and desultory conversation, "has recommended you very warmly to me. I do not ask," he added, with a significant smile, "where, or how, your acquaintance commenced: Charles, however, in spite of his foibles, has good qualities, and, as you are a young soldier, you will do well, in the duties of your profession, to make him your model. Sir Arthur Montague was in the service himself, I recollect, though we were not on the same duty.—Are you nearly related to him?"

"Very distantly, I believe," replied Montague, in a respectful tone; adding, after the pause and consideration of a moment, "I bear his name chiefly as a testimony of his kindness, and as one of three to which I have a claim: that of my family is Cavendish."

"Indeed!" said Colonel Mordaunt, with tokens of surprise.

"Personal misfortunes," added Montague, coloring, and proudly casting down his eyes as he spoke, "induce my father, who is at present in India, to bury his own name in obscurity: it will probably never be resumed till he can give it that consideration in life to which he believes it entitled."

"I am then to have the honor of commanding—Mr. *Cavendish!*" said the colonel, emphatically, and after a pause.—"Is Sir Arthur apprised of your intentions?"

"It was his judgment that determined me."

"Judiciously, no doubt," returned Colonel Mordaunt, after another thoughtful pause: then clearing his countenance, he added, "I think you can not do better than retain his name; it is known in the military world, and will be a recommendation." The conversation afterward relapsed into its former train; but it insensibly languished on the side of the colonel, who at length rang the bell, and ordered that some persons waiting to speak with him on business should be admitted. Montague taking the hint, made his bows, and respectfully departed. But he departed not as he had entered. A strange and petrifying damp had struck upon his heart, and extinguished all that ardor and self-possession with which he had met Colonel Mordaunt. Yet in the countenance or words of the latter there had been nothing decidedly to alarm or offend him. —The change, if any there was, had fallen in gradations so nice, that though the whole color of the picture was different, he knew not how to divine the alteration. A jealous pride bade him, indeed, trace it to the name of his father: a suspicious delicacy taught him to fear that Colonel Mordaunt might, in some transaction with that father, have been a sufferer. But so complicated was the feeling, so perplexed the recollection, that he could not at last ascertain whether it did not arise from a fastidious habit of mind, rather than a rational impression. The mortifying surmises that had before presented themselves, nevertheless, occurred afresh to his imagination; and he deeply regretted not having extorted from Sir Arthur a more exact detail of the misfortunes or indiscretion that had ruined Mr. Cavendish. Whatever might be the propriety of his feelings, one determination, however, fully resulted from them: never again to mention his family name, till he was absolutely sure that he could confer honor upon, or receive honor from it.

Reflections of this nature engrossed him some time, during a long and harassing walk into the city, where a succession of petty concerns detained him to a late hour. But chagrin and fatigue were at once put to flight, when, on his return, a letter, a long-expected letter, from Miss Rochford, was put into his hands. Eagerly opening it, he saw at once all that his heart desired—the pure and ingenuous language of unaltered tenderness. Both the manner and the style announced it to have been written in haste, and probably at the moment after his had been presented to her. She congratulated herself on the fortunate chance that had brought her, though for a short time, to London, when her aunt had torn her from it, without allowing her leisure to make those secret arrangements which would have ensured the receipt of his letters. She painted, in the most natural and tender terms, all the anxiety she had experienced during their separation, and that more poignant regret which his sudden and unexpected departure from England was calculated to inspire. Doubting, as she did, how far circumstances might allow either of them to command a single day, she hastened to say that it was her intention to see him at seven o'clock that very evening; an hour when the whole family were assembled at the dinner-table: from which, under color of indisposition, she meant to absent herself. "It was not thus by stealth," she tenderly added, "that you and I were accustomed to meet: but I am fettered by circumstances, and must bend to them."

The impatient lover hardly read the letter ere he looked at his watch. *Seven* o'clock! the hour was almost come, almost gone in his imagination, or would be, before he could reach his appointment: he was not long in doing so, however. As the number of the house was particularized in the date of the letter (for it was not that of Lady Selina), he had no difficulty in finding it, though the mortification of discovering that, late as he supposed himself, he was, in fact, too early. A very magnificent dining parlor was indeed lighted up; but as the curtains were not dropped, on account of the heat, and the lower shutters ill closed, it was easy to discern that the servants were still busy in preparation. Montague waited long enough to ascertain that a gay group of both sexes had been for some minutes seated round the table, when ringing the bell, Miss Rochford's maid, to whom he had been in the habit of enclosing his letters, immediately appeared, and conducted him up stairs. Every thing throughout the house strikingly announced splendor and profusion; and the noisy mirth that resounded from one part of it, formed a singular contrast to the profound stillness of the spacious apartments above. Miss Rochford was too much embarrassed by the mystery she had been obliged to observe, to receive him with an unmixed pleasure: but by stationing her maid in the ante-room, as if to guard against intrusion, she seemed willing to sanction, or at least to qualify to herself, the indecorum she felt guilty of. He had never seen her more lovely; yet was she rather paler than when they parted; and an air of fashion, and even something of affectation, had a little changed the expression of her countenance and manner. Even the ingenuous sweetness of her language betrayed that alteration which the circle she lived in was exactly calculated to produce; and throughout the course of an interview so often anticipated, and fondly rested upon, as that which was to give the color of happiness to many a long and painful day of separation, Montague thought he perceived but too clearly, that though the heart of Clara was still his, part, at least, of those simple and rational ideas, which, under the circumstances he stood in, could alone secure it from alienation, had already evaporated: the supposition was an almost insupportable wound to his own. Yet to whom could he apply for consolation? of what even could he complain? the poison, it was evident, existed in the very air she breathed, the society she lived in: no virtue was yet wanting in her character: no affection was blighted in her bosom. They seemed, alas, only withering there!

Montague loved too passionately to venture the language of reproach; but a profound and exquisite presentiment of sorrow seized upon his heart. His conversation grew suddenly common, uninteresting; and an air of languor, almost approaching to despondency, diffused itself over his features. No longer able to say what he felt, he seemed unwilling to say any thing; when his attention was suddenly awakened by the name of Mordaunt. He had himself told Miss Rochford by letter that it was in Colonel Mordaunt's regiment he had entered; and he now, rather from the wish of replying, than for any gratification to his curiosity, inquired whether she was acquainted with him.

"Undoubtedly I am," replied Clara; "adding, with a tone of surprise, "do you not know that we are at this moment in his house?"

"Most assuredly I did not," returned Montague, while his heart sprang to his lips, and suddenly suffused his cheek with crimson: for it had not escaped him in the conversation of the morning, that, though the colonel, at its commencement, had spoken largely of seeing him often, at parting, he had cautiously, and even decidedly, avoided repeating the invitation. Yet *his* was the very house into which, before evening closed, Montague had secretly entered like an intruder and a menial. The sense of humiliation attached to this idea lost nothing of its poignancy, when, by the ill fortune of staying with Miss Rochford, in spite of her repeated admonitions, just five minutes too long, he met the female party, from the dining parlor, on the stairs. His situation was much too embarrassing to admit of his distinguishing any one individually; but a slight and haughty bow, with an observing glance from the last, informed him that he passed Mrs. Mordaunt. The recollections that had occurred while Clara was present were painful; but those that now necessarily obtruded were distracting. It was clearly at Mrs. Mordaunt's villa that she had hitherto resided with her aunt during their absence from town: and with Mrs. Mordaunt, by the approbation of Lady Selina, he found she was, for some time, likely to remain: he saw her, therefore, at once embosomed in an arrogant, profuse, and dissipated family; the manners of which, according to his own observation, and the report of one whose authority could not be doubted, since it was Charles Mordaunt, united every thing dangerous and alluring: he saw himself, meanwhile, obscure, impoverished, and shut out from the circle in which she was invited to mingle. Nor did jealousy fail to take its turn in his mind, when he remembered the long and frequent visits of his friend to Windsor—remembered that Mordaunt might seize

> "On the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand,"

while he to whom it had been pledged was distant, and perhaps almost forgotten. Of this paroxysm, however, he soon had leisure to see the folly; in proportion as more close observation convinced him, that the heart of a man who loves gaming is rarely vulnerable to any softer passion.

If the situation of Montague's mind was painful, that of Miss Rochford's was not to be envied. The fluttered letter she had written was in fact rather the consequence of embarrassment than even of those sentiments to which love had given birth. She was passionately devoted to Mrs. Mordaunt; one among the few of her aunt's intimates whose manners and modes of living had something in them peculiarly attractive to a youthful mind: while the latter, having found in Miss Rochford an exquisite beauty, and a grace that adorned every extravagance of fashion, took pleasure in forming her on her own model. But Mrs. Mordaunt lived for the world, and in its gayest circles: so that Clara, who rather felt than acknowledged this, even to herself, was well aware that the avowal of an obscure and rustic attachment would degrade, if not render her ridiculous in the eyes of her friend. Yet loving Montague with ardor, she had not given him up, even apparently, without an effort; but it was the effort of a timid mind against a strong and decided one; and had consequently the effect that might be expected from it. Without courage to be wholly explicit upon a subject which she more than half suspected Mrs. Mordaunt was *resolved* not to understand, she next directed her hopes to Colonel Mordaunt; and hinted that she should be extremely happy to see Mr. Montague, as being the relation of her guardian, during his stay in town. The colonel coolly replied, "that it was not his custom to receive the subaltern officers at his house. So total an exclusion, though it grieved and astonished Clara, was yet capable of producing reflections little favorable to her lover; and had given that slight and almost imperceptible tinge to her manners, which he had felt, without being able either to complain of, or describe; while sensible, as she was, that the mysterious mode of their meeting had been a resource, not a choice, and was in its nature a flattering proof of her tenderness, it had never occurred to her to doubt whether he knew Colonel Mordaunt's house, or to calculate the kind of feeling which might naturally follow such an introduction into it.

In supposing Mrs. Mordaunt was resolved not to understand her, Clara had penetrated into the truth. The former had nevertheless too much knowledge of life not to be aware, when she met Montague on the stairs, to whom his visit must have been directed: but she had address and presence of mind enough to vail this discovery from the female circle, by a cursory observation that he came on business to the colonel. A glance over the features of the young man had shown her that he was handsome; but his long and fatiguing walk, his dress, which he had never changed since the morning, the chagrin that clouded his features, and the embarrassed air attendant on his situation, had robbed even grace itself of its charm; nor was it possible to have seen him to less advantage. Mrs. Mordaunt at once decided that he had no fashion—no manner—no importance. Whether he had virtues or claims she paused not to inquire. She had already formed her own hopes with regard to the future establishment of Clara: well assured, therefore, that nothing cherishes a first and girlish passion like habits of confidence, she resolved, without showing she suspected the sentiment, slowly and silently to extirpate it; and to widen that distance which both fortune and nature, she concluded, had placed between the lovers.

The hour that was to transport Montague to new scenes, and a new sphere of action, at length arrived. He embarked in the same vessel with young Mordaunt; silently followed by every gentler wish of Miss Rochford's heart, overwhelmed with the kindness, the benedictions, the prayers of the affectionate Sir Arthur. Ah! could his eye rest on the wide world of waters without recollecting that its billows rolled between him, and one, whose wishes more deep, more fervent than those of all beside, though blended with the winds, and dispersed in the immensity of space, yet found a path through both to hover over *his* head! It is, however, the peculiar disadvantage of certain societies to be bound too closely to each other, and, consequently, to give to either the good or bad habits that prevail in the body at large a treble power of acting over the individual. Soft and refined feelings were ill suited to the situation of a young man who was surrounded with the gay, the dissipated, and the uninformed: and Montague was more particularly exposed to danger, as the warmth of his character gave him a strong flow of animal spirits, and a talent for conversation always embellished them. The associates to whom his taste, however, chiefly directed him, were, happily, neither profligate nor corrupt; and even among the rest, some had good qualities, and some had understanding. But the majority of those around were a common class of characters, whose whole merit consisted in a due discharge of the business of the day, and who, neither desiring, nor deserving, any higher praise than that of being good soldiers, were nearly as mechanical in their ideas as in their military maneuvers. Of this praise, however, Montague soon acquired even more than his share. An excessive ardor in every pursuit, increased by the influence of a powerful and exquisitely susceptible pride, had been, indeed, at a very early period, the marking characteristic of his mind; and was likely to prove, throughout life, according as it was worthily or unworthily directed, his merit, his misfortune, or his scourge. The zeal with which he now attended both to the study and duties of his profession presently excited the astonishment of those who were accustomed to consider every exertion as a matter of habit or necessity. By the more enlightened and active he was, however, soon distinguished as a young man of the most promising talents; and all agreed that the application of them would infallibly place him very high in the favor and opinion of Colonel Mordaunt. Charles Mordaunt even, whose partiality towards Montague was greatly increased by the discovery he daily made of his abilities, and the delight he took in his society, frequently rallied the latter on the distinction he would acquire over himself: and in the secret exultation which their united applause was calculated to inspire, the hours flew rapidly and lightly away.

Those motives which had induced the two nations to wear a hostile appearance, became at length sufficiently guessed at to persuade the chief military men on both sides that no actual service was likely to ensue. The troops, however, still kept strictly within garrison, and cherished that ardor and discipline by which, should occasion call them forth, they hoped to acquire superior reputation. Colonel Mordaunt, who had been too much in the circle of the court not to know, long before, all that was necessary or expected from him, had been hitherto engaged in England by a variety of circumstances that equally concerned him in his public and private capacity. His presence was at length hourly expected; and every officer was doubly ambitious to show, by his individual exertions, how solicitous he had been to keep up the honor of a corps of which they all knew their superior was so jealous. Among the hearts that most proudly looked forward to the event of the colonel's arrival was that of Montague. He had felt himself rapidly rising in general estimation. Even those who, from envious motives, did not personally like, yet joined to applaud him; and he already anticipated, in imagination, the most exquisite of all pleasures; that of triumphing, by the mere force of merit, over the arrogance, or the accidental prejudice, of one, who, whatever might be his failings, he yet believed to possess judgment and military ardor enough to applaud desert.

From all these towering hopes, these high-raised expectations, he fell at once: a glance, a word of Colonel Mordaunt's annihilated them. "Every officer in my regiment, I presume, does his duty," said the colonel, coldly turning his back on the parade both to Montague and his own son, as the latter, perceiving a marked neglect or inattention in his father, somewhat too officiously interfered. The speech, the manner, and the circumstances that accompanied or succeeded both, though not immediately obvious in their effect, were nevertheless decisive. All who hoped, all who feared, all who, without opinion or judgment of their own, follow that of the majority, gradually receded from the intimacy of a young man who, whatever his merit, was guilty of the crime of not pleasing. Such, however, were the habits of subordination, or the effects of consciousness, that what each man observed, no one commented upon, lest its operation upon his own conduct should become remarkable to his hearer. Montague, therefore, condemned without being arraigned, and shunned without having transgressed, had, in a very few weeks, but too much opportunity to observe that

> "Our genuine virtues do more sweet and clear
> In fortune's graceful dress appear;"

since the gallant spirit that had lately extorted praise, and the application that seemed to ensure esteem, were by turns sneered at as quixotism or pedantry, when the favoring smile was no longer likely to gild them.

The feelings of an enthusiastic and aspiring young man, who saw himself enthralled in a bondage it was useless to complain of, and hopeless soon to escape, may much more easily be imagined than described. Injury he might have atoned—error he might have corrected—nay, even prejudice, as man to man, he might have boldly stepped forward to contradict or rectify: but his oppressor was, from the circumstances of situation, armed with weapons which he could encounter on no equal terms either of reason or of force: and though the iron daily eat into his very soul, he was obliged to smooth his brow, and form his lip into a smile in the presence of him who forged the chain.

A succession of petty mortifications and silent insults, though of all grievances, perhaps, most intolerably oppressive, nevertheless soon fades from the observation of the many. Yet among those to whom the conduct of the colonel long continued a subject of secret surprise and indignation, was his own son. Despising a prejudice which he knew not how to account for, and had too much levity to investigate, Mordaunt attached himself to the person whom he conceived injured by it with a spirit that defied control. In the characters of the two young men, though there was much that was dissimilar, there were also many strong points of union. But the superiority had hitherto laid all on the side of Montague; who, with equal good qualities, had established them on a firmer basis than his friend. These were now in danger of being shaken through the medium of every thing most generous in either nature: and, by a cruel fatality, the injustice of the father seemed likely to prove a far less misfortune than the kindness of the son.

Charles Mordaunt, though possessed of rectitude and feeling in his own person, yet associated, through the influence of a single vice, with the most dangerous and dissipated part of the military world; men who, secretly indulging an extravagant passion for play, staked, but too often, their fortunes, their characters, nay, eventually, their very lives on the hazard of a die. Montague had naturally little or no propensity to an error so fatal: but he had an ardent and impetuous character, eagerly disposed to grasp at every thing that bore but the semblance of a pursuit. While engaged in that professional one which he flattered himself was to render his career in life both prosperous and distinguished, he had resisted, with invincible fortitude, every allurement to dissipation; but his enthusiasm was now violently impelled from its natural bias: all, therefore, that was taken from the scale of honor was gradually thrown into that of indiscretion, and it was in danger of sinking low indeed beneath the weight. Yet the rectitude of his mind rather yielding to circumstances than to temptation, failed not at intervals to assert itself; but its efforts were daily more feeble, as the effects of disappointment were more intense. No longer able to find pleasure in his duties—little cherished in general society, and, from the nature of his situation, devoid of amusement for solitude, he learnt by degrees to indulge that as a taste, which too soon, habitually, became an occupation; and, from the very difficulties in which it involved him, such is the weakness of our nature! blended so intimately with his feelings as almost to become a passion.

Sir Arthur's resources had been bounded; and it was those only that had bounded his liberality. When in the army himself, however, he had been in habits of extravagance, which, if not approved by his reason, were fully justified by his hopes; nor did the demands of his young friend, therefore, at first either startle or alarm him. But unfortunately it was not always that Montague could prevail on himself to make his exigencies known to one whose very kindness was a reproach. Without the same resources as young Mordaunt, he consequently became plunged in far greater embarrassments: yet was it those very resources that threatened finally to undermine the principles and the prudence of both.

When the colonel took his station at Gibraltar, Mrs. Mordaunt had accompanied him thither. A very delicate and uncertain state of health, impaired daily by the dissipation in which she had lived, though it united with pride to seclude her from general society, yet withdrew her not from the select one she still affected to hold. Montague, to whom her name announced mortification, and who only rejoiced at her absence from England as it released Miss Rochford from her influence, had never desired to mingle in these parties; the less, as he had now reason to fear that her report of him, even if just, might not gratify the heart of Clara, and, through the means of the latter, might call forth the disapprobation of Sir Arthur. Young Mordaunt, however, who, though he possessed very small influence with his father, had yet a most unbounded one over his mother, frequently painted her in colors so alluring, that his friend felt disposed to recede from a prejudice hastily taken up. As all prospect of war had ceased soon after the arrival of the colonel, several families, whose relations were in garrison, had quitted Gibraltar to reside in the town of St. Roque. The fine ruins scattered near, and the romantic beauty of the spot, which was situated upon a full and winding river, afforded a more healthy and pleasant retreat than could be found within the narrow limits of the walls. The house in which Mrs. Mordaunt resided, embellished by her taste and habits of living, soon became the central point of extravagance and folly. The species of amusement to which she was so passionately devoted, she there indulged at full, within the circle of her family and guests: and, far from correcting in her son in law habits her own example had either implanted or justified, she furnished him liberally with pecuniary assistance whenever his father was inflexible: nor was it seldom that the money thus lavished was, in turn, fatally applied by him to foster the indiscretion, or, as circumstances demanded, to redeem the honor of his friend.

The deep sense of injustice which ever indignantly preyed upon the mind of Montague, irritated by temporary provocations, sometimes urged him, against his better judgment, to show Colonel Mordaunt a personal and haughty defiance. Among the temptations to this which he had hitherto resisted, was that inadvertently held out by young Mordaunt himself; who, without weighing the delicacies of situation, or the possible ill consequence to all parties, had frequently offered to present his friend to his mother. The indifference, not to say disgust, that subsisted between her and her husband, as well as the bold independence with which she asserted her own rights and modes of living, Montague had had sufficient opportunity indirectly to understand; and he sometimes figured to himself a sort of indignant gratification in the idea of mingling, without the invitation or concurrence of the man who oppressed him, in a circle where he well knew many, who were only his equals, had been received with kindness, and distinguished by intimacy.

To this rash project occasion was at length favorable: young Mordaunt had been for some days slightly indisposed, during which time he had resided at St. Roque; and the frequent messages he had sent from thence sufficiently authorized the meditated visit. The weather was extremely sultry; and Montague, who, after the professional duties of the morning, and a long walk, had no great inclination to stand in the sun in the garden, where he found his friend talking upon business with a soldier, passed on, at the invitation of the former, into the house. It was a low, though spacious building, latticed after the Spanish fashion, and commanding a sweep of the river exactly at that point where it was most beautifully wooded. The entrance was through a vestibule constructed upon a Moorish pavement, curiously wrought. and filled with orange-trees in flower, the exquisite odor of which diffused itself deliciously around. The hall opened to a circular pavilion, elegantly fitted up with cushions and sofa seats, and where both light and heat were subdued by shades. On one side stood an ornamented work-table, whence somebody appeared lately to have risen; on the other a desk of the same kind, at which a young woman was seated. Montague, who had been desired to enter, and consequently had not apprehended that he should be guilty of any intrusion, stopped, and, slightly apologizing, would have retreated. A civil acknowledgment, however, negatived the motion: and, as the room was singular, and embellished with great taste, he continued to stand and look around him. Among the ornaments that chiefly engrossed his attention, the living one was not the last. She had resumed her occupation, which was writing music: and, the distance of her manner, together with the simplicity of her dress, which seemed to owe all its grace to the fair form of the wearer, left him at a loss to decide whether she was guest, visitor, or attendant on Mrs. Mordaunt. Whatever might be her rank, he thought he had rarely seen a face, the features of which were finished with such exquisite regularity. The beauty of her lip, which, by an almost imperceptible movement, seemed from time to time to form, in imagination, the notes marked by her fingers, particularly captivated him; and even a soft and sleepy air which her long dark lashes, as they were cast down, gave to her countenance, added to it a charm totally distinct from that of any other woman. While he meditated how to break the silence, it was broken by young Mordaunt; who, slightly kissing the fair hand of the stranger as he entered, with a kind inquiry after her health, requested permission to introduce Mr. Montague; announcing her at the same time to the latter as Mrs. Mordaunt.

Invariably accustomed as Montague had been to annex the ideas of arrogance and affectation to that name, it was with some difficulty that he concealed his surprise; nor was it lessened by the soft and easy affability with which she saluted him. In the beauty of her person, however, and the polish of her manners, he became immediately and deeply sensible of that charm which had ensured the devotion of all who approached her: yet her spirits or her health seemed delicate, for she spoke little; only at intervals raising her eyes from her employment, and rather taking through them her part in the conversation; while Montague silently wondered how any face could seem perfect in which those beautiful eyes were vailed, and where his had been when he met her on the stairs at her own house: forgetful that such was then the embarrassment of his situation, that Helen herself might probably have passed him without his distinguishing a single feature of her countenance.

The dinner, to which he was invited to stay, was very elegantly served, though the guests were few; and the romantic beauty of the spot, together with the conversation of Mrs. Mordaunt, which, by an effort that seemed to exhaust her spirits, though not her understanding, was sprightly and captivating, gave to common topics and characters a singular charm. Clearer daylight, more open dress, and a nearer examination, nevertheless, discovered to Montague that the form he had admired, however lovely, was not altogether so perfect as he had at first believed it to be. Mrs. Mordaunt was past the bloom of life; and her complexion, though delicate, evidently owed much to art: yet was she so regularly and touchingly handsome, that neither the heart nor the eye could willingly acknowledge that it wanted any charm she did not possess. As evening began to close, the parties withdrew to the pavilion, the air of which was now embalmed with the scent of the orange flowers, and where Mrs. Mordaunt's harp was placed. It was then that she knew herself to be wholly irresistible. The exquisite line of beauty preserved in her features; her form, over which every garment was drapery, and of which every motion was grace; her fine eyes thrown forward to heaven, as if music were rather inspiration than science; with the corresponding position of her white arms, seen through the cords of her harp; while her lips, half open, emitted the most languishing sounds; all united to form an image of celestial harmony and sweetness.

But this angel of the moment sank almost as suddenly from her visionary excellence. Anxiety, anger, spleen, every corrosive passion attendant on one cherished and pernicious vice, in the course of a very few hours disfigured her features. Charles Mordaunt, in whom, as well as in herself, an inveterate habit so superseded every recollection, that he neither felt nor weighed the losses of his friend, continued to urge the fortunes of both to a deep and ruinous excess: and when, after a chaos of hope, fear, and disappointment, Montague quitted the spot, it was with a gloomy presentiment that if his prosperity or peace were dear to him, he ought never to visit it again. But he had at length touched the fated circle; he was within the spell of the enchantress; and every better resolution melted before it. Mrs. Mordaunt, independent of beauty, possessed manner, taste, and cultivation, that powerfully captivated all who had either: Montague, therefore, found himself as ill able to resist the pleasure of her society, as the influence of her example: but it was a pleasure purchased with destruction. Accidental gains and accumulated losses soon inspired that desperate boldness which left him little more to lose but honor. He lost to those who were not enriched by his ruin, not happier for his misery: to one who, while plunging him in an abyss whence no time probably could rescue him, only satisfied the importunate demands of a vacant mind, of an extravagant and ill-directed sensibility. Such was Mrs. Mordaunt. Money she despised: cruelty she abhorred: but she had prescribed to herself no duty, no tie, no rule in life; and thus wanting all that should have filled up hers, became a blooming and pestilential poison in society.

Something of that lovely and perfect creature she ought to have been, was, nevertheless, by starts, still discernible. Depression, sadness even, a wild and wandering sensibility, would at times announce that her heart wanted a resting-place: that, had she been capable of regulating that heart, it might well have commanded the feelings of every one around. It was then that her mind appeared not to have "lost all its original brightness," but diffused somewhat so perfect and so dazzling over her exterior, that she seemed hardly

> "Less than arch-angel ruin'd, and th' excess
> Of glory obscured."

These were, however, momentary starts; illusive images of a perfection at which she aimed not: her spirits were often unequal from the delicate state of her health; and it was obvious, even to a common observer, that her health as frequently suffered from the fluctuation of her spirits.

The indiscretion of a few months sometimes forms the history of a life. Most truly so: for its consequences too often dye the color of that life; nor does any vice more effectually do it than that which Montague now pursued. From the mind of the ill fated young man those finer particles, which once constituted its essence and its charm, were gradually moldering away. Extravagance, poverty, remorse, all appearing to attach themselves to the name of Mordaunt, by turns combined, through the medium of allurement or persecution, to undo him. His temper became harassed; his faculties bewildered: even the letters of Miss Rochford, as if she had been endued with supernatural intelligence, communicated an alarm and depression which now seemed to incorporate with every thing that surrounded him: while those of Sir Arthur, calling back the vanished images of honor, emulation, happiness, and love, only deepened that heavy and inconceivable gloom with which his recollection was so often clouded. Could he, without a shame that covered his cheek with blushes, avow, even to himself, that those letters were rendered chiefly acceptable by the remittances they contained? Abhorring the sordid idea, he a thousand times swore to renounce the vice that could so debase him. Remonstrances, too, now frequently accompanied the letters.—Ah! when the kind, the liberal, the indulgent Sir Arthur remonstrated, with what pangs ought not that heart to be wrung that gave him the occasion! Yet still the occasion presented itself; and still in Mrs. Mordaunt's society, attracted by that peculiar charm, that powerful interest she was so calculated to excite, Montague ever sought either to soothe, or to bury his cares.—The distant prospect thus clouded, the near one was blacker still. To his professional duties he was but too sensible that he had been lately worse than indifferent—neglectful: yet the eyes of Colonel Mordaunt, like those of a secret inquisitor, a malignant genius, ever silently upon him, watched his conduct, scrutinized his thoughts, and seemed only to wait some gloomy and mysterious moment on which to decide his fate.

"It was dark December—wind and rain." Mrs. Mordaunt had been for some days confined to her apartment by indisposition, and the two young men were returning one evening, arm in arm, from St. Roque to the town, when they suddenly encountered the colonel. As they were both wrapped in military cloaks, he challenged without knowing them; but, on recognizing his son, ordered him, somewhat harshly, to hasten onwards. Then turning abruptly to Montague, he haughtily, and even insolently, demanded, "what carried *him* so often to St. Roque?"—It was one of those luckless points of time when the mind of the latter was wrought up by internal chagrin, and what he at least conceived to be accumulated provocations, to a pitch of irritability that shook his better reason, and thus roused, at once defied it. His answer was more than abrupt—it was disrespectful. Affronted, both as an officer and a gentleman, the astonished colonel replied in terms little suited to either character; and, in the fever of the moment, Montague rashly extended his arm to strike him.

"Are you mad?" said young Mordaunt, seizing hold of it. The blow fell short; but the offence was given—the indignity was irremediable.

"You will take charge of that young man to his quarters," said Colonel Mordaunt to his son, and coolly walked forwards. On arriving there, Montague was, as he expected, immediately put under arrest.

Abandoned to solitude and silence, he might now, had the tumult of his blood permitted, have found ample leisure to review the past: but it was yet only a confused mass of which he had no power to distinguish the features. While his head was beating, and his heart bursting with indignation, a packet of letters was delivered him from England. Two dear and well known hands at once presented themselves to his eyes: he trembled at sight of the third—it was his father's. A sentiment of reverence, a tender consciousness that he neither deserved nor could at that moment endure parental fondness, at once overcame him, and he put the letter aside. Clara too!—No!—He could better bear Sir Arthur's; the language of the kind-hearted Sir Arthur, touching not so intimately the nicer springs of his soul, would probably relieve, console him. Alas! Montague knew not yet the bitterness of that pang which attends receiving unmerited kindness: a pang perhaps of all others *most* bitter, since it falls upon us with its whole weight, only while we are alike new to error and to suffering.

Sir Arthur's letter was frank and affectionate, like his character. It breathed no reproach; but the subject matter was reproach enough. He was in London:—he had exerted himself, he assured Montague, to the utmost, to obtain the money requested of him, "but he was not yet *so fortunate* as to be able to remit it. That no want of economy on his own part, however, might interfere to prevent this, he was, at the moment of writing, in lodgings rather straitened and inconvenient, his infirmities considered.—Finally, that he every day hoped for the return of Mr. Cavendish, whose deep and proud sense of honor would, beyond doubt, rather induce him to expose himself to difficulties than suffer his son to encounter any."—There was something in the simple detail that Montague found it impossible to go through with. Sullenly, therefore, repelling the blush from his cheek, and the suffusion from his eyes, he broke the seal of Miss Rochford's letter.—It was calculated to add an ominous gloom to the moment. Coldness, distrust, the language of a wounded heart, breathed in every line. "If circumstances," said she, towards the conclusion, "should finally divide us, remember, at least, that they have been of your creating. To dwell on the painful surmises that have embittered my hours would be vain: those of Sir Arthur are happily not yet reduced to certainty; though the vague and broken language of your letters has not escaped *his* attention:—How then, should it mine? Alas! in Mrs. Mordaunt's details—— " At the name of Mordaunt, Montague crushed the paper in his hand, in bitter and resentful silence.

Every nerve shook as he opened the third letter; a sort of fate seemed attached to it, over which his mind already mysteriously and vaguely brooded. It was long, impassioned, and written, it appeared, on the very day when his own, the most interesting one he had ever addressed to his father, had been received by him. "Sir Arthur's caution, my dear William," said the latter, "has kept from you more of my concerns than at your time of life, and possessed of principles such as my heart ascribes to you, I should have deemed it necessary, or even wise, to suppress. But the period is nearly arrived when all secrecy will be at an end. The vessel in which I am preparing to embark with Lord Montresor now lies in the river. It is hardly possible to imagine the emotion and interest with which I look at it, or the various ideas that pass through my mind in long succession, when I consider whither it is to bear me. I read your letter with a tumultuous pleasure, as if it annihilated the distance between us, and I already seem to clasp to my bosom a son whom my proud heart will fondly beat, even in its proudest moments, to acknowledge. He shall not long *demand his happiness at my hands;* I will myself bestow on him that precious gift he so ardently desires, and in the hope of which he is, I doubt not, realizing every exalted and noble idea which he has with so much energy described. Ah, William, let me not find this promise an illusion!—let me indeed embrace one worthy of my long cherished love, my high raised expectations! Rather may the grave eternally divide us than allow me to survive the final disappointment of my hopes! for too surely, if my son prove not honorable, I both must and will *renounce him.*"

"No, my father! it is he who must renounce you," said Montague, as, laying the letter on the table, he took down his pistols, and, with much apparent coolness, loaded them. Endued with a high-toned sensibility, and an extravagant pride; ascribing to his actions a criminality beyond that which a sober review of the various follies of life would have taught him to assign them; involved in poverty; harassed with debts of honor; subject, through his own indiscretion, to martial law, and in the toils of an enemy who could enforce its utmost rigor; Montague, in the temporary frenzy of his mind, believed that he had nothing to do but to die. Well he remembered the circumstances under which he had written to his father, and the terms of the letter. Where were now those high-sounding principles which in the presumption of youth he had dared to assure himself would regulate his conduct? Of what nature would be that justice he then so arrogantly claimed? This son, who "pledged himself never to let his father regret that he had given his life a charm, nor to blush if he gave it a distinction," had been, at his first outset in it, the slave of his passions, and the victim of his pride.—The reflection was too bitter—the occasion that presented it too critical. After a short consideration, therefore, he took, pen, ink, and paper, and laying the letters before him, began to answer them separately. The task, however, was more than either his head or his heart was then equal to; yet he felt that to live a little beyond the narrow period of existence he had assigned to himself; to be remembered when he had "passed that bourne from which no traveler returns" by a few tender and affectionate beings; to render the tears they would shed less bitter, and the recollection of his follies less odious, would be an extenuation of them in his own eyes. Morning, however, surprised him ere the task was finished, and it had scarce dawned before a hasty footstep at the door warned him of some intrusion. Hardly had he time to throw his papers over the pistols, when Charles Mordaunt entered. The wan and disheveled appearance of Montague sufficiently indicated how he had passed the night. Mordaunt drew a chair, and aware that he might offend the pride, if he attempted to soothe the feelings of his friend, began to talk in a strain that was neither gay nor grave. Montague heard without attending to him, till he mentioned with anxiety that his mother was much worse. "Something," said he, "disturbed her, I am told, extremely last night.—I can not think what devil possessed us all—and my father in particular," added he, as if willing to introduce the name without exclusively referring to the circumstances uppermost in the minds of both.—Montague made no immediate answer.

"Do you fight duels with your own shadow?" continued Mordaunt, pointing to the pistols, which, by a slight motion communicated to the table, were become visible.

"They were here by accident," said Montague, sullenly, as he rose to put them aside.—Mordaunt examined one.

"And *loaded* too by accident! Come, come, my dear friend! I am not to learn to what excesses disappointment and chagrin may lead a man. Yet, *prudentially* speaking, suicide is, I believe, one of those crimes a person rarely resolves on till he has touched some crisis when common sense, had he the use of it, would tell him that his fate must mend of itself. You, at any rate, have debts, and can not go honorably out of the world without discharging them. I do not mean by *that* argument, however, to detain you: so far otherwise," he added, taking out his pocket-book with bills in it, "that I am going to give you the opportunity of deciding for yourself.—Our acquaintance," he continued, more seriously, on seeing the repulsive motion of his friend, "began with a pecuniary kindness on your part: are you resolved to end the one, at the moment I would cancel the other?"

"You are talking at random."

"I hope I am.—This, however, is not the chief purport of my visit. I saw my father late last night, and am entrusted with a message from him to you. Do not mistake me," he added, with a seriousness that almost amounted to solemnity, as he perceived by the rising color and animated eyes of his friend that he had taken up a very erroneous idea. "At your time of life, or at mine, my dear Montague, the summary proceeding which I see occurs to you would probably settle all differences. But Colonel Mordaunt, believe me, stands not in the predicament, either as an officer or a man, that should render it necessary for him to prove a courage long since fully established.—I am commissioned to say that he means to see you this morning. Weigh well the manner in which you will receive him. Aware, as on reflection you are, or ought to be, of your relative duties and situations, it becomes you at least to call up that sobriety of mind which shall acquit you—to *yourself*."

The fine countenance of Mordaunt was lighted up, as he spoke, to a dignity which Montague had never before seen it express. But the occasion was not that on which the cooler faculties of his own mind were yet capable of exerting themselves. The mention of the colonel's visit had again awakened a crowd of rebellious and indignant feelings; and he proudly assured his heart nothing should escape his lips that could look like an apology to a man he despised. By that singular self-command, however, of which a high-wrought spirit is capable, he smoothed his brow, ordered the table to be cleared, and, perceiving that his friend did not intend to quit the room, called for coffee. It was not late when Colonel Mordaunt was announced; and Montague, who in cold silence prepared to receive him, experienced at the first salute that internal surprise and revolution which seizes upon the mind, when we find we have, by a violent exertion, called up its powers to combat that which no longer appears hostile. Colonel Mordaunt entered with a singular grace and self-possession that ever attended him in his happier hours: avoiding the smallest tincture of arrogance in his manner, he motioned to his son and Montague to be seated; and, pausing for a short time before he spoke, as if fully to consider the subject, at length, with a calm and collected air, addressed himself to the latter. An hour before it would have been impossible to have persuaded the young man that any thing could come from Colonel Mordaunt's lips which he could have listened to with tranquillity, or assented to with truth: but the latter, well apprised of his own rights in life, of the claims of his situation, of the influence of his years, and of that superiority which a calm and steady tone of mind ever possesses over a wild and extravagant one, now spoke a language that was totally unexpected: previously challenging, with a boldness that seemed to denote the justice of the appeal, the sober judgment of his hearer, as an auxiliary in the cause against him.

Without condescending to dwell upon the indignity offered to himself, or its ill consequences professionally, Colonel Mordaunt took a review of the conduct of him who offered it, upon the great basis of general good order and morality. He represented, in forcible language, the degradation to which a man of honor is subject in his *own* eyes, when, forgetting what is due to himself, he subverts the regulations of society at large, and more especially of that particular one which he is pledged to support. He even touched, with some sensibility, upon the folly of blighting, at an early period of life, those prospects and that estimation which give life all its zest to the possessor, and endear it to those to whom *he* is dear. A rational father, in short, speaking to his son, would have spoken nearly in the same tone as Colonel Mordaunt did; and so well did he know how to address himself to the feelings of an ingenuous and too susceptible young man, by keeping in the back-ground, with masterly judgment, all that could irritate them, and displaying with eloquence the mischiefs they produced, that, by an enchantment Montague hardly knew how to account for, the whole weight of error seemed suddenly tranferred to himself.

"Having thought it necessary to say thus much," continued the colonel, who attentively read in his countenance all the transitions of his mind, "I have but little more to add. The nature of your trespass," pursued he, while his voice was sensibly changed and his color heightened, "is known only to the three present. On my own part I demand simply the apology due to a gentleman.—It will be proper, however, for every reason, that you should enter into another regiment: you have, therefore, my leave of absence. Go to England: you will there find no difficulty in exchanging your commission. I believe," continued he, after a moment's pause, "that if you are disposed for a remote station, I could point out to you a very advantageous one:—but on that my son and you must confer."—As if he feared he had conceded too greatly, the colonel stopped, and fixed his eyes earnestly on Montague. But it was far otherwise: had he conceded less he had probably gained nothing. A generous heart will always give beyond what is demanded of it; and that of the young man, incapable of a medium, now at once dictated an apology the more ample because unpremeditated, and which sprang spontaneously to his lips, before either his pride or his judgment could be called in as counsellors.

"How arrogant, how illiberal, how unjust have I been!" said he to Charles Mordaunt, when the colonel was gone. "How has my narrow-minded jealousy misconstrued the words and looks of your father at moments when his penetrating mind was, doubtless, diving into my character, and discovering all its latent faults!"

"My father," said Mordaunt, thoughtfully, and as if he felt less struck with the candor and generosity of the former than his friend had been, "piques himself upon knowledge of the world. It may, possibly, be sometimes a useful science; yet, on the whole, it is but a despicable one: and often produces in the hearts where it is too minutely cultivated, as many faults as it discovers in those around.—What circumstance, pray, first gave you reason to imagine that he was prejudiced against you?"

"A mere trifle;—it was the mention of my father that awakened my observation. From the moment the name of Cavendish reached Colonel Mordaunt, I suspected myself to be odious to him."

"*Cavendish!*" repeated his friend, starting, and changing color, "What Cavendish?—Is your father alive?—Where is he?"

"He has been almost fourteen years in India, with Lord Montresor."

"And can you possibly be ignorant that Mrs. Mordaunt is the *divorced* wife of Mr. Cavendish?"

In those few words how much was comprised! An arrow through the heart of Montague could hardly have inflicted a pang more acute; while a crowd of tumultuous recollections rushing to his brain, at once confirmed the truth thus strangely developed. *The divorced wife of Mr. Cavendish!* Gracious God! this then was the secret calamity, the long-hidden sorrow that silently consumed his father's heart: Mrs. Mordaunt was the fair creature so early lost to her son, and found again only to wreck him: the charmer of the world, whose accomplishments had dazzled all eyes in it, while the simple and domestic Lady Montague was fulfilling those duties which she had deserted! There was something too bitter, too afflicting, in the long train of ideas that rapidly succeeded each other. It was, then, his own mother who had shed poison over his nights, and poverty over his days.—His mother, who, carelessly scattering the seeds of folly and corruption, had inadvertently nourished them in *his* bosom. It was she who had armed the hand of a military despot against him; who had even armed his own! In alienating from him the first dues of nature, she seemed to have given him a cruel promise of the future. All hearts, through her influence, had combined to grieve or to oppress him: and even the tender, the ingenuous Clara had become less ingenuous, less tender, from the alluring power of one worldly and dissipated woman!—Nor let the dissipated and worldly woman who has escaped the misery of destroying her own son too rashly exult. Mothers more worthy than herself daily weep over those of either sex her attraction has led to vice, or her example to folly.

All that had hitherto been inexplicable in the conduct of Colonel Mordaunt was now clear as open daylight. Even that which had most worn the semblance of moderation and virtue ceased to be such, when it became obvious to recollection that no public inquiry could have been instituted into the conduct of Montague, without necessarily bringing forward, even as a common theme, such particulars of his birth and family as must not only have reached the ears of his mother, but have exposed the colonel to all the odium of being a persecutor; since, by mentioning the name of Cavendish, the young man had himself, at that very first interview, discovered at once the important secret which a moment's observation convinced his hearer was unknown even to him who betrayed it.

Mrs. Mordaunt, a co-heiress, affluent at the period that Cavendish was ruined, and she herself divorced, became considerably more affluent by the death of those who would have shared her wealth. She had carried to Colonel Mordaunt a splendid fortune, of which the disposal was vested in herself. Could he with unconcern see her daily on the brink of discovering a son whose personal graces and good qualities were so calculated to endear him? She too, who having no children by her second husband, so passionately longed, so ardently sighed, to see that very one who daily hovered round her without her knowing him! It was against this the unhappy Cavendish carefully guarded. Leaving her to carry into that world she loved a then unbroken beauty, unwearying spirits, the pride of triumph, the rage of conquest, he had only been solicitous to preserve from her snare, during his own absence, a son whom he well knew she would purchase at any price. All the fears of a proud and anxious father had been sufficiently alarmed by the attempt made to carry off the child, even in infancy. The seclusion with Sir Arthur, whose name had been a profound secret to all around at the time he took the boy away, Mr. Cavendish had imagined was sufficient to guard him from his mother; and that mother herself had been so effectually deceived, as always to suppose that the infant embarked with his father for India. Time elapsed before Mrs. Mordaunt recovered, by her second marriage, a part of the acceptation in society she had forfeited: but the period was spent in a foreign country with a seducer who was never able to give her the sanction of his name, as he was already married; and it was many years after her return to England that ill fortune united with the ill conduct of her son to embosom him in that very circle where the story was never likely to reach his ears. It had reached them now:—ah, it reached his heart! as young Mordaunt and he, by turns ashamed, bewildered, and confounded, related to each other all that was yet new to either, of events in which both were so deeply interested. The colonel had known his son too well to confide to him the secret which a thousand circumstances might have led him to betray. But while to the levity and indiscretion of youth Charles Mordaunt added a generosity and pride that his father could not trust, he added also a penetration that father could not escape. A behavior in the latter towards Montague at once so rash and so cautious—a moderation so excessive—a pardon so indulgent—had all appeared in the eyes of the son, circumstances equally new and extraordinary; and while pausing over that which had already surprised him, he was yet more surprised at the singular proposal of removing the young man still further from England.—Such is, however, the dangerous nature of duplicity, and its tendency to overshoot itself, that the very circumstance which duped one mind enlightened the other; and where the warm and agitated heart of Montague believed it ought to acknowledge a kindness, the more cool and collected judgment of Mordaunt discerned the possibility of a snare.

It seemed to be the singular fate of the former, however, to endure within the course of a very few hours every revolution of which the human mind is capable. The tide of indignant shame which flowed through his heart had hardly yet receded, when that of nature, breaking down every barrier, impetuously rushed in, as he learned that through the heart of his unfortunate mother it had indeed rushed with a vehemence that threatened rapidly to expel the vital principle. Mrs. Mordaunt had received long and explanatory letters from England by by the same vessel which brought those to her son; and, by a mysterious ordination, the very hour when the paroxysm of contending passions had urged him to lift his hand against his own existence, was exactly that when she discovered where and how he existed at all. It was the tender and confidential communication of Miss Rochford that plunged a dagger in the bosom of her friend: nor did the former even know the pang she had inflicted; for Mrs. Mordaunt's story was no new tale of slander; and in the circle of Lady Selina her affluence and fashion rendered her too acceptable to induce them to revive it. The innocent Clara, therefore, had heard incessantly of her beauty, her talents, her fortune, without ever being warned by the gray-haired votaries of the world of that speck which dimmed them all.

In the habits of correspondence, Miss Rochford had not been able to forbear some inquiries concerning Montague that spoke her attachment to him to be more serious than Mrs. Mordaunt had suspected it to be. The accounts of the latter were, as he too well guessed, not favorable either to his morals or his conduct. Adhering to a plan which she had not only formed, but in some instances acted upon, Mrs. Mordaunt, in her turn, became more explicit; and represented to her young friend the superior advantages she would derive from a union with Charles Mordaunt. But Clara loved—tenderly, truly loved; and though she conceived resentment enough against Montague to write coldly to *him*, the same sentiment no longer actuated her when writing to her friend. Taking up, therefore, at full, the history of her engagement, she at length recited with frankness and ardor all its attendant circumstances. What a picture to present to the recollection of Mrs. Mordaunt! To read again, and again, the long-forgotten name of *Cavendish.* To hear described, in the tender language of Clara, that untold, but overwhelming calamity, which had "fractured the heart of the father, and blighted the fortune of the son." To reflect that she had been lavishing that wealth they both, it was plain, alternately had wanted: that she had been cherishing a vice which had still more impoverished her only child, and unconsciously striving, by every allurement, to expel him from the heart in which he had garnered up his own:—to add to this the cruel possibility that, in making herself known to him, she might incur indignity and scorn, were all circumstances that, in the feverish state of her blood, were calculated to destroy her. While yet plunged in a chaos of contending passions, the accidental tale of a domestic informed her, with many exaggerated particulars, that Montague lay under arrest by the order of Colonel Mordaunt. The last blow fell with a force too sudden and accumulated. Long habituated to the indulgence of every extravagant feeling—already a prey to the irritability of sickness, and the tedium of life, hers at once became odious: the fever of her spirits mounted to her brain; and while Colonel Mordaunt was profoundly scheming, and the two young men as anxiously deliberating, an unexpected occurrence thus exposed to her whole family, and through them to the world at large, that secret which four and twenty hours before had been unknown even to the parties most deeply interested in it.

But what was the world to Mrs. Mordaunt! Already it faded from her eyes—Its visions, its vanities, its pleasures!—Her long-lavished wealth, her flattered beauty—all that had seduced, all that had betrayed her,—could neither restore connection to her ideas, nor coolness to her blood. That son whom she wildly demanded, whose presence she continually implored—to whom she declared she must confide a secret more important than existence, vainly knelt whole nights by her bedside; and receiving there the burning tears of anguish and remorse, well remembered those tender ones she had shed upon his infant bosom. To exist without knowing him had been the guilt of her life, and to expire without recollecting him made the misery of her death.

Of the various hearts thus acutely wrung, Colonel Mordaunt's, through the medium of his pride, was not perhaps the least sufferer. Yet since it could no longer create surprise that he should desire the absence of a young man so peculiarly circumstanced as Montague was now publicly known to be, he assisted to hasten his departure; vainly endeavoring, in the interim, to bury, in a profound and disdainful silence, all suspicion of his own previous knowledge of the past. By a will made soon after their marriage, the colonel knew himself to be his wife's sole heir. He had not, however, failed to keep a jealous eye upon her during her sickness: but the circumstances that attended it, sufficiently precluded all possibility of a new arrangement, whatever might have been her wishes. Strangers, therefore,—strangers at least in blood,—were to revel in Mrs. Mordaunt's splendid fortune, while nothing became the property of her unfortunate son, but a picture of her given him by Charles Mordaunt. Often, however, did he gaze on this, the interesting companion of his approaching voyage. It represented her in the pride of youth and beauty, and to the perfect regularity of her own features, added, at least in his imagination, some of those touching and simple graces that marked Miss Rochford. She seemed to be about two-or-three-and twenty: it had therefore probably been drawn at the very period when he was taken from her in the dressing-room: and, while her lovely outline played before his fancy, he strove "through the long perspective of distant years," to ascertain the shadowy recollection. It was a period, alas! too distinctly marked to his father, by jealousy, by dissension, by all the acute and soul-harrowing feelings which at length drove him to the extremity that separated them for ever.

As the vessel receded from those luckless shores on which both his peace and his existence had been so nearly wrecked, the feelings of Montague gradually harmonized. Of those he left behind him, Charles Mordaunt alone excited a lasting regret. In the bosom of that generous young man he had seen a noble spirit of honor and of rectitude, which he could not too deeply lament was sullied with an almost incurable vice. Yet of the vice that events had combined to cherish, events had also shown him the danger and the evil: nor did he want a mind to reflect upon, nor a heart to feel them. His purse, while Montague continued abroad, was liberally open to the latter: and there was something singularly affecting in the situation of two young men, the one of whom bestowed what he did not think his own; while the other, from the pressure of circumstances, received what might justly be deemed so, as an obligation. In letters which, during a moment of frenzy, had increased the fever of his mind, Montague now sought its balm: for what is there, self-reproach excepted, to which affection is not a balm? It is happily a property peculiar to that feeling only, to convert the heart's best nourishment into poison. Yet of the extent of his indiscretions he was still most painfully sensible; since they had induced him to receive from young Mordaunt testimonies of kindness he would have disdained from any other human being, and which, even to him, he burned to be acquitted of. But it is the nature of some errors, perhaps of all, to ascertain their punishment: and the proud heart that, disdaining to bound its follies, arrogates too much self-dependence, will almost always find in their consequences that it has left itself too little. Sir Arthur's indulgence Montague had sufficiently proved to rely on it, and he felt a tender confidence that Miss Rochford would pardon faults deeply lamented, and grievously expiated. It was to his father he most anxiously looked forward. His letter seemed to announce that he would be in England as soon, or sooner, than his son: but as of the state of his circumstances he said nothing, and even spoke of himself as returning in the train of Lord Montresor, Montague, who had imbibed from Sir Arthur the persuasion that his father was rather an interesting visionary, than an active character, easily concluded that they had not prospered according to his wishes. Such, however, is the influence of the gentler affections, when not expelled by selfish and tumultuous passions, that the same young man to whom, in the wild career of the former, an impoverished father could not have failed to become an object of regret, now felt that the tender tie which before bound them to each other would be a thousand times more endeared should his son be all that was left to Mr. Cavendish.

By a sweet association of ideas, therefore, happiness and England became intimately blended in the imagination of Montague. The breezes that blew him thither seemed fraught with health; and, like sailors in a calenture, he felt persuaded that the verdure of his native woods and fields would expel alike from his frame and and his heart every feverish or corrosive tendency that preyed on either. He greeted at length the welcome shores; and though neither verdure nor sunshine enlivened them, that bright beam with which the eye gilds every object it loves, left nothing wanting in the season. That the vessel in which the governor-general was expected had been seen in the Channel he learned before he landed : and he now impatiently hastened to London, assured that his father would be there before him. In this expectation, however, he was disappointed. On stopping at the house whither his letters for Sir Arthur had been directed, he found that the latter had removed to a more eligible situation, and that no person of the name of Cavendish, nor any one in the household of Lord Montresor, was yet arrived. There was a charm in Lady Selina's door that powerfully attracted him towards it. Yet, since to present himself there with so much abruptness might produce disagreeable consequences to Miss Rochford, and to neglect Sir Arthur might incur unpleasant ones to himself, he resisted the temptation. A faint hope too struggled in his bosom, though against all reasonable probability, that as both were in daily expectation of his arrival, he might probably, by some fortunate chance, find them together. He had, indeed, written most fully the detail of events he shrunk from relating : not, perhaps, without a secret view of so bribing their hearts in his cause, as to leave little to the decision of their judgments.

A traveling carriage, followed by a chaise and suitable attendants, drove by him as he was walking up the street to which he had been directed : but they attracted not his notice till he was suddenly struck with seeing them stop, as he believed, at Sir Arthur's door.—Could he be deceived ? The sudden palpitation of his heart, and the emotion that diffused itself over his frame, hardly left him power to hasten onward. He came close enough, however, to discern that two gentlemen alighted from the first carriage. The one, as nearly as he could distinguish, was handsome, sunburnt, and his imagination told him had a military air : the second was not so tall, and appeared something younger. Both were in deep mourning: and in the one, or the other, he assured himself that he at length saw a father. An exquisite and inexplicable emotion at once made his head swim, and suffused his eyes with tears. As he was in one of the longest streets of London, it was necessary, however, to recover both his sight and his fortitude before he could possibly reach the door. The first question there assured him that he was right; Lord Montresor and a gentleman were indeed arrived, but of the name of the latter, the servant, who perfectly knew Montague, was uninformed. Impatiently, and without the power of deliberating, he followed the man up stairs, where he burst in at once upon the astonished Sir Arthur, and the elder of the gentlemen he had seen. The good baronet, though ill able to stand from the attacks of the gout, clasped him to his bosom. Then, suddenly recollecting himself, turned round, and presented him, by the name of William Cavendish, to Lord Montresor.

"Pardon me, my Lord," said the disappointed young man, past all power of dissembling, and struck with melancholy apprehension at remembering Lord Montresor's mourning—"I hoped—I had expected to see a father here!"

"And do you *not* see a father?" replied a voice, the tender tones of which Montague could almost have persuaded himself were familiar to his ear.—"Ah William, beloved William!" said Lord Montresor, folding him in his arms, "I had indeed forgotten I was one, when I meditated but for a moment to deceive you." The sweet and joyful sensations that succeeded were past all language. Ah! happiness and England were indeed found together: and the hour in which they were found seemed to overpay an age of feverish suffering.

"I had indeed meditated," said Lord Montresor, after having somewhat satisfied his eyes and heart, "a plot upon my son. Sir Arthur and I, in the profoundness of our sagacity, were to play the austere judges. I, you know, was to weigh his talents, his character, his conduct," continued he, turning with a smile to his friend,—"but I saw his features, and I forgot all the rest." Sir Arthur, who did not feel a positive assurance that all the rest would be quite so gratifying to Lord Montresor as the latter seemed to imagine, now took the opportunity of recounting, in a summary manner, the cause of Montague's expedition abroad: and while a thousand varying recollections passed through the mind of the young man, and wandered in different suffusions over his features, Sir Arthur strove to direct the conversation of Lord Montresor to subjects that more immediately concerned himself.

"I carried to India," said the latter, deeply sighing, "a lacerated heart. What passed in it for many years my letters may have informed you better than my recollections will ever do. At the time I left England, I well knew myself to be, by the death of an infant, next in succession to Lord Montresor's title: but I buried the secret proudly in my bosom; for his fortune, the fruit of his talents, was his own to dispose of: and that to which I had no claim, either by personal merit or service, I could not even wish to appropriate. Yet to give to my son what the misfortunes of his father, and the misconduct of—his mother," he faintly added, while the 'hectic of a moment passed across his cheek,' "threatened wholly to deprive him of, was the pre-eminent and indulged wish of my heart. Lord Montresor had, in my boyish days, tenderly loved me. He continued to do so even during the eclipse of all my better faculties; or rather that very circumstance increased his love: and the eager desire he saw in me to deserve his regard before I would benefit by it, a desire that seemed to outlive almost every other principle of life, except paternal affection, attached him deeply and invariably to my fate. When my better reason returned, I became the valued friend, the endeared companion, the chosen confidant of a heart overwhelmed with many cares and some sorrows:—finally, I became the heir of Lord Montresor: he died during the passage home.—The love of wealth or distinction, my son," he continued, turning to William Cavendish, "was not, believe me, the inherent foible of my nature; it was the offspring of misfortune, and must find its apology in our mutual use of them. But where," he added, endeavoring with a smile to disperse the gloomy train of images that had insensibly taken possession of his mind, "where is that blessing I am yet to bestow on my son? Where is the sweet girl who is to be my second acquaintance in England?"

Clara had not been forgotten by Sir Arthur, nor was she slow in obeying his summons. The heart of her lover beat quick at her approach. Anxiously he raised his eyes, and imploringly directed them from her to his father, as if to deprecate the censure which he feared her very looks might convey: but Miss Rochford had too deeply shared in the sorrow of the past, and seen it through too favorable a medium, in Sir Arthur's representations, to retain any sentiment stronger than sympathy or tenderness. She could not forget that it was from her hand, though innocently, that Mrs. Mordaunt had received a death-wound; and could the tears of Clara have remedied the misfortune which she accused herself of having caused, William Cavendish had not lost a mother. Even a secret sense of injustice to her lover seemed to blend with every other feeling, on remembering that there were moments when allurement and misrepresentation had almost shaken her affianced faith. In her eyes, therefore, he read only a sweet responsive sentiment, more sad than reproachful. But though from them he could demand an act of oblivion, it was what he could not so readily grant to himself. In his father he saw all that his imagination or his heart demanded: anxiously, therefore, he directed his thoughts inward, to weigh what he should find there, and deeply revolved the manner in which he should introduce a subject which he could not resolve wholly to suppress.

"I have seen a face like that before," said Lord Montresor, turning to Sir Arthur, after gazing long and mournfully upon the features of his son, whose deep reverie had suffused his cheek with a soft and almost feminine glow.

"Could you bear to see it again, my father?" said William, expressively raising his eyes. "No longer *living*, indeed!" he added, with an emotion increased by that he had caused; "but surely," and he drew from his bosom the picture of his mother, "surely it will gratify her spirit to know that my father has shed over *this* the tear of absolution and pardon." Lord Montresor, at once comprehending him, snatched the picture—the fond memorial of many a happy—many a miserable day; and gazing on it, as it still sweetly smiled, while the fair original was low in dust, covered it with kisses; then, continuing to press it alternately to his lips and his heart, he buried his face over it, as if willing to conceal, even from himself, the acuteness of his recollection, the excess of his regret. Impressed with tender sympathy, the two young people sunk at his feet.

"She made, I am told, another choice," said Lord Montresor, as, affectionately raising them, he seemed by a violent effort to recover himself: "Was it"—and his voice again faltered—"was it a happy one?"

"Far, far the contrary, I fear," said Clara; first capable of speaking. "By a concurrence of circumstances it was my lot to be a witness of those domestic dissensions that arose from mutual disesteem. Colonel Mordaunt," she added, turning to her lover, as if she feared to shock Lord Montresor with a name that could not but be hateful to his heart, "was proud, tyrannical, self-interested.

Of the latter trait in his character she had proofs so convincing, that it induced her, before she followed him abroad, which she did under a gloomy impression that she should never return, to entrust to my charge a sacred deposit. I suspect—indeed, from the solemnity with which it was delivered to me, I have reason to assure myself, that it can be only her will."

It was indeed her will: the treasured secret that had laid heavy on her soul in her last hour, and which, living in a circle where she could find every thing rather than a friend, she had been reduced to confide to the integrity of so young a creature as Miss Rochford; well persuaded that its tenor was too advantageous to the latter, not to be duly asserted by her relations.—Mrs. Mordaunt, in pursuance of the plan which she had long before conceived of uniting Miss Rochford with her son-in-law, bequeathed to each a very considerable legacy; unfettered, however, by any restriction. The greater part of her fortune was allotted to her son by Mr. Cavendish. No mention was made of Colonel Mordaunt, but that the marriage articles prescribed; and every particular was drawn up with a legal skill and precision that, while it denoted a masterly hand, at once pointed out the distrust and resentment of her who dictated it.

That Colonel Mordaunt triumphed not in the spoils of the Cavendish family, could not but be gratifying to the man whom he had oppressed. In the tears of Lord Montresor had been perfected the absolution of the dead in this world, while his benediction, together with Sir Arthur's, soon completed the happiness of the living. And so deeply was the lesson of moderation and self-distrust impressed on the heart of William Cavendish, that Miss Rochford had, indeed, never cause to regret she gave his life a charm, nor his father to blush for having struggled to give it a distinction.

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